

Engraven Desire



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Eros, Image & Text in the French Eighteenth Century

BY PHILIP STEWART

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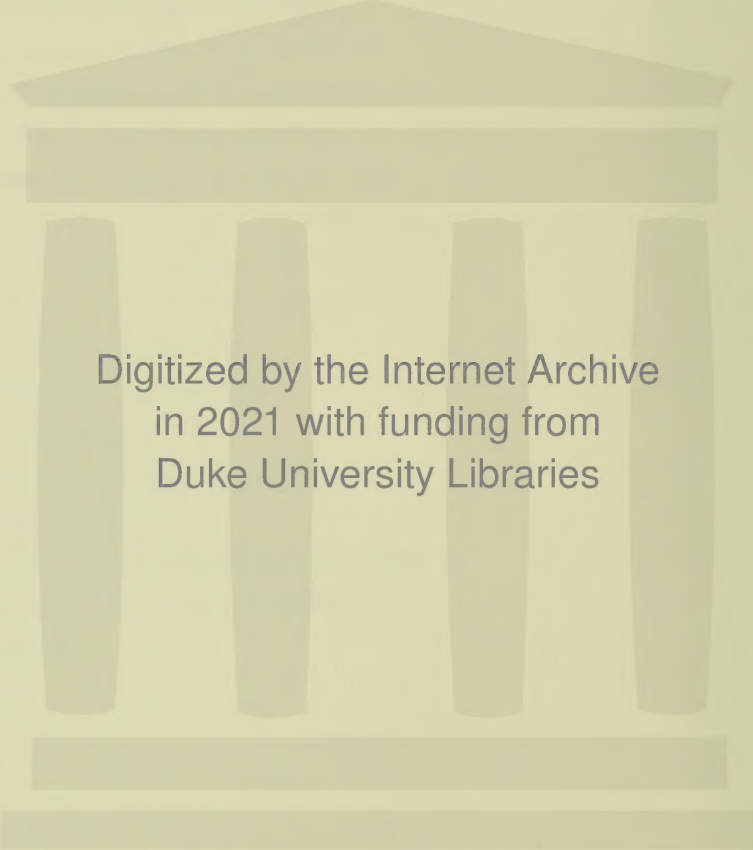
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Preface

Engraving is everywhere in the eighteenth century. A finely perfected technique, it was the only means of reproducing works of art in quantity; many painters, including Nicolas Poussin, Antoine Watteau, and Jean-Baptiste Greuze, reached a wide public in this manner, and the Flemish and Italian painters would have been little known in France without it.¹ Engraving was so important in this role that even today almost any book dealing with eighteenth-century painting has to rely at least occasionally on copper plates copied from canvases that now cannot be found. This kind of imitative engraving, noble but derivative, was the only one exhibited at the Salon de l'Académie. As time went on, more plates came to be created from original designs, usually with anecdotal titles of some sort; this development parallels the emergence of the artist-designer as distinct from the engraver. Engraving was also the only means of illustrating a typeset text. Many of the volumes expensively illustrated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were massive folios ranging from nature and travel books to Jean-Baptiste Oudry's monumental tribute to La Fontaine (1755–1759, §46). But it is principally the smaller scale illustrations that concern us here, specifically, those accompanying works of literature.

A publisher's decision to have a book illustrated was and is still a commercial as much as an æsthetic one: illustration has always been expensive. Although there were certainly instances where an author or his Mæcenas underwrote the costs so as to secure the prestige attached to an illustrated edition, the financial risk entailed normally supposed a predictable type of buyer who could afford, and would wish to possess, the particular product envisaged. The greater the reputation of the artists and the more skilled the workmen engaged, the higher, too, would be the investment, and in consequence the more carefully selected, to begin with, would be the text and the intended public. Not infrequently, therefore, a reissuance

of a book, even a relatively new one, bore the title-page mention *enrichi de figures*, including sometimes the names of the artist(s), to help attract the buyer.

Book illustration was already an accomplished art in the seventeenth century, most of it in large format (octavo to folio); then, as now, the size indicates the relative opulence of both volume and purchaser. Luxury editions continued to appear fairly regularly in the eighteenth century, but in the literary domain a much more noticeable illustrative corpus arose in the smaller formats, particularly duodecimo. This trend was owing in part to the growing number of engravers trained in the small number of expert workshops, and it encouraged the emergence of illustrative artists, many of whom made the designing of book plates their major occupation. (Some artists and engravers even specialized in work on the smallest scale: headpieces, tailpieces, and vignettes or *culs de lampe*.) This reduction no doubt served to contain the cost of illustration, though it hardly made it inexpensive when performed by the highly skilled. Cruder production and cheaper paper eventually made possible an almost popular level of illustration, exploited particularly in the pornographic trade.

Inasmuch as my study inevitably fails to mention thousands of (subjectively) less interesting engravings, its focus is intrinsically skewed toward precisely that luxury category of books where one is most likely to encounter the work of the most sought-after artists. In particular, that means the classics of the period: for example, Ovid, the Bible, Tasso, the *Fables* of La Fontaine. A publisher was much less likely to go to such expense for literature new and unproven. Classics have been prominently featured in the libraries of the well-to-do ever since a book-buying public came into existence, and engravings, prized in their own right, added to the volumes' status. Several works in this category were illustrated many times over, in some cases, even century after century.

Another important class of illustrated books, however, was less ostensibly honorable and probably, like most novels, played a fundamentally different kind of role in the buyer's library. These were the erotic texts, often classics themselves although in a different tradition—Boccaccio, La Fontaine's *Contes*, Voltaire's *Pucelle d'Orléans*, and the like. The fact that this kind of literature, too, found ready publishers for deluxe editions, added to the fact that the first category of dignified classics also contained powerfully sensual motifs, largely accounts for the relatively important role accorded in this study to images of erotic significance.

Although first attracted to the copper engravings of the eighteenth century in essentially æsthetic ways, I became increasingly intrigued by the

complex relationships between them and the literature they usually accompany. There is no doubt that the combination of some gifted illustrators with skilled engravers and equally able printers gave us many of the most exquisite volumes in the history of publication, and several elegant studies and exhibit catalogues in recent years have celebrated their beauty. Copper engraving potentially is one of the most delicate of all artistic media. Although today recourse is usually had, even in the best bibliophilic publications, to halftone reproductions, these reduce fine contrast to a range of grays and thus rob them of the remarkable intricacy that only originals in a good condition can convey. The engraver is much like a jeweler or miniaturist: by pure steadiness of hand he must carve dozens of discrete and sharp lines per inch, modulating their width, density, and contour over the surface of the plate; his finest works are as exquisite as those of any craft known. (Sometimes, the artist's drawings themselves retain a similar delicacy.) For their preservation we have the dedicated bibliophiles to thank. Their own studies, however, have dealt more with the artists and the states of the etchings and engravings than with such questions as how an illustrated text is read.

It was to inquire into the question of the interrelation of text and image that this study was undertaken: it is not devoted to art form as such, but is an approach to images with a particular function and in their specifically literary context. A comprehensive treatment was out of the question, but even a selective survey seems to shed light on some insistent themes and to clarify the mechanics of the problem. The material under study is principally French and principally eighteenth century, for practical reasons. Besides corresponding to the period whose literature and art I know best, those limits serve to contain the vast corpus that otherwise would make the subject unmanageable.

My purpose is to do justice to the power of the illustrative traditions as well as to the way they form, and are formed by, their relation to literature. Neither province is, in any case, autonomous. It is not enough to say that literary works play off (the "influence of") others, and that images do as well, nor even that the image is literarily conditioned in ways that form a counterpoint to the visuality of literature, however true these premises be. The confrontation of an image *with* a text embodies, along with complementarity, a sort of defiance: a challenge to its mastery, an assertion of a coequal viewpoint. In certain ways it might even be helpful to think of illustration as being "against" rather than "to" the text, probing its tacit ambiguities if not its weaknesses. Even more interesting, at times, are the

tricks it can play with metaphor; for although both image and text can of course be metaphoric, they cannot always—and perhaps cannot usually—adopt each other's metaphors and thus are tempted to substitute, literalize, or otherwise transmogrify the metaphors they feed upon in the other medium.

When literature employs well-known visual themes, they function in terms of the traditions of both art and literature. I am specifically concerned with the interweavings and confrontation between the two, whereas most studies of illustration discuss the relation between text and image as if it were determined by just one. It is certainly true that the same literary texts tend to be illustrated over and over, and that each set of illustrations tends to resemble the last, at least in some fundamental ways. I will particularly contend, however, that linkages exist between illustrations irrespective of the specific identity of the texts being illustrated. Speaking schematically, every plate has three intertexts: the prevalent iconographic repertory; sometimes, the internal series of plates to which it belongs; and the literary work to which it is attached. For our purposes, it is essential to consider them as simultaneously operative, and the analysis must attempt to reflect this simultaneity.

The movement of the book thus attempts to balance two types of argument. The first stresses the common visual features of a disconnected range of illustrations, extending the ordinary notions of subject and motif to more complex shared patterns that, for want of a better label, I call "inter-visual paradigms." These are of course closely related to textual thematics; they point to obsessions of the written not less than the visual, and thus they participate in broad intertextual paradigms and not just intervisual ones. The second type reverts to the level of discrete discriminations between illustrations, recognizing both literary differences in the treatment of similar motifs and the interplay between particular illustrations and their particular texts. Such an approach entails skipping from item to item but helps avoid the risk of selecting out (and perhaps belaboring) too few examples. The demonstration is, instead, cumulative and as such depends on richness of repetitions and interference of the themes discussed.

I am not concerned with tracing the origin of each motif, which is frequently ancient, but of describing its function within a given configuration of other motifs. A Greek myth might not fulfill the same role at all in its original historical context that it does in eighteenth-century France. Alain-Marie Bassy, whose reflections on approaches to the study of illustration have helped to situate and illuminate the whole field, couches the relevant signifying system in terms of the figural tradition that largely concerns me

here: "It is via the series that the image signifies. It is but a segment, a sequence in a system of which the reader must, piece by piece, as in dominos, reconstruct the totality" (1984: 155–56). But my object is not confined to the pure interplay of illustrations; it is also to bring image and text into a sort of global dialogue, consciously trying to avert the cleavage that Bassy cautioned against, the risk that "a gap may be created between a system of literature which, in terms of intertextuality, refers only to itself, and a system of illustration which would also function within a closed circle, in a sort of 'inter-iconicity' " (1984: 155–56). My aim is to avoid both extremes.

Other things being more or less equal, preference has been given to examples that have not been widely reproduced in other books on engraving. Most of them are from literary books, but autonomous prints come into play as well (as do, to a lesser degree, paintings), both because they share many of the same themes and because they must be read in juxtaposition with text in much the same ways as illustrations.

Since this is not primarily a bibliophilic study, the complexity of references has been minimized. Copper plates were often reused, and when that happened, they were often at least partially reengraved to restore their sharpness, with the fine detail inevitably modified in the process. Identifying and presenting the original in its most pristine form is of great importance for the specialized study of engraving as an artistic technique, but less so for the study of content. I have garnered my examples where I could and try to respect their authenticity without encumbering the reader with details relating to their origin.

In order to keep references brief, I have signaled all titles of primary sources and editions that figure in the bibliography at the end of the volume by the sign § followed by the bibliography number and volume and/or page references. The relationship of designer to engraver is abbreviated in the form: artist/engraver (*invenit/sculpsit* when signed on the plate). For secondary sources, the standard date reference is used, again with full information given in the bibliography at the end.

English translations frequently cited are listed separately at the end of the bibliography. Many of the works used in this study have never been translated, and in some instances even the preferred translation seemed inadequate for justifying the relationship of a specific passage to an illustration. All translations not specifically identified are my own.

I am much indebted to Robert Dawson for his collection and knowledge of French books; to the scholars and staff in the libraries that have assisted me, in particular, the rare book room of the Perkins Library at Duke Uni-

versity, the British Art Center and the Beineke and Sterling libraries at Yale University, the rare book collection of the Library of Congress, the Bibliothèque municipale de Montpellier, and, of course, the Bibliothèque nationale. I have also benefited from the assistance of grants from the Yale Center for British Art and the Duke University Research Council. Among those who have read the manuscript critically I have particularly to thank James Rolleston, Paul Hunter, Gita May, Jay Caplan, and Barbara Reitt. Great credit for the good qualities of this volume is due to Reynolds Smith, Mary Mendell, Jean Brady, and Tom Campbell of Duke University Press.

I began by dropping the picture theory of language and ended by adopting the language theory of pictures. —Nelson Goodman, *Problems and Projects*

Whereas we have traditionally been accustomed to reading literature by analogy with the plastic arts and with music, we now have to recognize the necessity of a non-perceptual, linguistic moment in painting and music, and learn to *read* pictures rather than to *imagine* meaning. —Paul de Man, *The Resistance to Theory*

The proliferation in recent years of reflections on the relationship of literature and art, or more generally word and image, has had surprisingly little place for the subject of literary illustration, which would seem to be the field of their most apparent interaction. Perhaps what this tells us is that a certain tenacious hierarchy in art appreciation still relegates small engravings to the station of minor art, and this both because they are diminutive and because, more importantly, they too evidently manifest an ontological dependence upon the thing imitated—which in its case is not nature, as in classical theory, but narrative. Some seem to have assumed, in consequence, that the subject was artistically minor and semiotically shallow.

This book will treat, in combination rather than serially, three distinguishable but decidedly overlapping subjects: the semiotics of engravings, or the ways in which they are coded and read;¹ the intertextual network relating similar kinds of engravings to each other, more or less independently of the texts to which they are ostensibly tied; and the interplay between particular illustrations and the texts they accompany. The second of these, demonstrating the relation to each other of images whose apparent denotations may be totally unrelated, is the least studied aspect of book illustration, although indeed each of these avenues is still in the early stages of exploration. Recent essays by Alain-Marie Bassy, Alain Guillerm, Gérard Gréverand, and Claude Labrosse have provided many of the needed clues for a comprehensive and varied field of study.

First we must look at the question of how illustrations can and cannot be said to represent text; that is, in what mode they actualize, in their medium, what is assumed to be “contained” in another. Inasmuch as the pertinent text is frequently a narrative, there follows a consideration of what the narrative functions, if any, of a synchronous picture might be.

This leads to a discussion of intrinsic factors that set illustration as art and medium apart from the world of painting with which, nonetheless, it must always in some degree be compared. And finally, returning to the image-text analogy, there is the matter of how we go about “reading” illustrations, particularly when they are overlaid with allegorical referents.

Reading and Illustrating

It is well understood by now that one cannot be content to describe illustrations in terms of their “fidelity” to a text in the sense of being a potentially unmediated copy of something that takes place in narrative. The figure, in other words, cannot be thought of as a signifier whose signified is simply the literary text, but rather as some kind of intertext. What we usually mean by the notion of an illustration’s supposed fidelity to, or respect of, the text is more plausibly thought of as a state of *compatibility* or noncontradiction (or, in Nelson Goodman’s terminology, of compliance)² between the information each contains and the texts to which it relates. But there is no literal sense in which an illustration can be a direct transcription from language to image. Obviously, however, the term *literal* is often used casually, in a relative sense, to describe illustrations that are rigidly unimaginative, seeming to add as little as possible to the minimal verbal cues taken from the text.³

Our first principle of analysis must therefore be that a text never determines how it is illustrated. It does not, in the first place, decide which scenes are to be represented, although there are ways in which it can flag the attention of a potential illustrator; in short tales or tragedies there is usually a fairly evident sort of crisis line or climactic scene that is by all odds the most likely to be selected. In longer, more complex works the range of the artist’s options is great.⁴ Still, the manner of treating the subject would not be imposed, even if its essential content were. But the choice is powerfully influenced as well by extraneous factors, in particular, by previous illustrations of the same text or other texts.

Illustrations may, up to a point, be thought of as actualizations or “readings” (or even in a certain sense “performances”) of the text, much as individual acts of reading are in reception theory. Pointing out that “the verb ‘illustrate’ itself seems to have been used to refer to verbal elucidation before it was transferred to the pictorial supplementation of verbal texts,” Wendy Steiner concludes: “These usages indicate the rootedness of illustration in interpretation and intertextuality” (1982: 141). Such “reading”

is constrained by definable boundaries yet by no means fully determined; an indefinite number of illustrations could be compatible with the text, not only because any number of distinct moments of action might be picked for illustration, but also because for any such moment any number of illustrations is imaginable. This is the essential perspective of Gérard Gréverand: "each illustrator contributes his own intelligibility of the text; thus there is always the possibility of a new intelligibility, an infinite field of the figuratively possible" (1983: 91). Such selection may color the story by what it omits as well as what it includes: thus, Jean Sgard notes, in terms of the eight plates by Jacques-Jean Pasquier and Hubert François Gravelot for the *Manon Lescaut* of 1753, the whole concentration is on the two lovers, to the exclusion of such important characters in the novel as Des Grieux's father; religion, Manon's betrayals are absent (1988: 283, 286). Yet two other theoretical situations must still be envisioned: that the notion of an eventual illustration might itself be a generating factor in the production of the text; and that illustration and text may be less than perfectly compatible, either because the former is obeying rules of its own, or because it embodies a particular angle that is being (visually) applied to the reading of the work.

Illustrations, as Thomas Pavel remarks, can respond only to the informational content of a text and not readily to its stylistic or narratological aspects (1986: 74). In keeping with this insight (and method), one could formulate the propositional equivalent of this notion of compatibility. If one imagines a set of statements that could more or less indisputably be made about the (visually semantic) contents of any picture, any one of these statements could then be said to be "contained by" or "belonging to" the picture itself, in the same manner that elements of meaning or "semes" are said to be possessed by particular words. The number of such statements, though possibly very large, ought to be finite; and the set is at least partly different from the sum of sentences that belong to the text itself. In fact, any statement pertaining to an illustration of a literary text that is not in fact to be found in the text, or could not at least be said to be valid in the text's "world," would constitute an instance of incompatibility; the subset of such statements might consist of none at all (total compatibility of text and illustration) or the entire parent set (a possibility, for instance, when the wrong plate is affixed to a work).⁵ One could account for the contents of this subset in various ways: inattention to the text, imaginative excess, artistic license, and the like.

Generally, however, the relation between text and image is, even if not strictly derivative, not exactly reversible either. For if the image can act

upon the reader, it is nonetheless powerless, as Gréverand notes, to affect the text qua text:

We have to recognize that a variation in an aspect of the image does not entail a change in the narrative it accompanies; hence we cannot consider the illustration as the signifier of a text which is more or less its caption and which, in this perspective, would constitute its signified. Image and text are not the front and back sides of the same meaning. (1983: 93)

This applies at least to the pure model in which the text is assigned clear temporal priority. But there are also, both theoretically and practically, more complicated interrelations. The most obvious one is the case where the author has selected either the artist or the subjects of illustration; as in the collaboration between playwright and director, it is impossible then to say that the latter does not supply sometimes decisive feedback to the former. It is tempting to conjecture that Antoine François Prévost had a hand in determining the illustrations for the 1753 *Manon*,⁶ and beyond any doubt that Jean-Jacques Rousseau specified the subjects for his *Julie* in 1761. At that extremity of the scale, William Blake and Salomon Gessner being the only examples that readily suggest themselves within this time frame, authors are their own artists. But one must also consider the subtler anterior influence exerted during the writing process by the realization that a particular situation would lend itself well to illustration, or even the writer's tendency to conceive episodes (and this constitutes the optimal model in Denis Diderot's thought) so that they can. At this level, "illustration" merges with the general category of dramatic imagination, and the potential engraving becomes one of the factors involved in the production of the literary text.

There is thus an inherently interactive relationship between writer and draftsman, for an understanding of which one can seek some clues in the kind of textual cues to which the artist responds. Just as there are *scènes à faire* (obvious if not facile dramatic situations) in relation to the plot of a play or novel, so one can point in many texts to what one might call *scènes à illustrer*. Take this example from Louvet de Couvray's *Amours du chevalier de Faublas*, where the baron discovers his son Faublas in a dark room with Mme de Lignolle and Justine (with whom he has just made love, believing her to be Mme de B***):

Un cri d'effroi m'échappa. . . . Le baron, armé d'une bougie fatale, s'arrêta dans l'embrasure de la porte; et *quelle scène* il éclaira! *D'abord lui-*

même, qui comptait ne trouver qu'une femme avec son fils, ne fut pas médiocrement *étonné* d'en voir deux qui se tenaient amicalement par la main. *Madame de Lignolle ensuite*, madame de Lignolle également *indignée, honteuse et surprise*, montrait assez, sur son visage où se peignaient les combats de plusieurs passions contraires, qu'elle ne pouvait ni me pardonner l'infidélité que sans doute je venais de lui faire, ni se pardonner à elle-même les sottes caresses dont il n'y a qu'un instant elle accablait sa rivale, *sa rivale qui, toute droite plantée contre la muraille*, ne donnait pas signe de vie. Mais vous jugez que *des quatre acteurs de cette étrange scène, je ne fus pas le moins stupéfait*, lorsqu'un coup d'oeil, furtivement jeté sur l'infortunée statue, m'eut fait reconnaître... je la regardai trois fois encore avant de me persuader que mes sens eussent pu m'égarer à ce point... Cette femme, dans les bras de laquelle j'avais cru posséder la plus belle des femmes, ce n'était qu'une brunette passablement gentille! celle en qui tout à l'heure j'idolâtrais Madame de B***, ce n'était que Justine! (§49: 3:125; italics added)

[I let out a cry of fright. . . . The baron, armed with a fateful candle, came to a stop in the doorway; and *what a scene* he illuminated! *He, to begin with*, expecting only to find a woman with his son, was not a little *surprised* to see two of them holding hands amicably. *Then Mme de Lignolle, indignant, shamed and surprised all at once*, whose face, crossed by different and opposite emotions, indicated sufficiently that she could neither forgive me the infidelity that I had doubtless just committed, nor forgive herself the foolish caresses she had just the minute before been showering on *her rival who, frozen upright against the wall*, gave no sign of life. But you can judge that *of the four actors in this strange scene I was not the least stupified* when a furtive glance at that unfortunate statue revealed to me... I had to look three times before I could accept that I could have been so carried away by my own senses... This woman, in whose arms I thought I was possessing the most beautiful of women, was no more than a fairly nice brunette: she in whose person I had just adored Mme de B*** was merely Justine!]

The narrative here imposes a stasis on the reader's imagination, effectively freezing the diegetic action while the narrative catches up with its dynamic potential. The notion of *scène* combines and bridges reference to theater ("quatre acteurs") and painting. The narrative judgment "Quelle scène!" by being repeated in the caption, becomes at the same time a commentary on the illustration—and on illustration. In such spaces do the

writer looking for illustrations and the artist parsing a text for subjects sometimes meet.

Illustration as Narrative

A basic, qualitative difference between text and image, recognized in the age-old comparisons of poetry to painting, is that a text is diachronic and a picture synchronic. Although an image may have a narrative content—a subject that Diderot discusses, placing great emphasis upon the range of artistic choices and the importance of the specific narrative moment selected—that content must necessarily be communicated, via gestures suspended in progress or signs of acts either completed or about to be performed,⁷ through a medium whose mode of existence is synchronic. This had not always been so strictly the case. Saint Francis could be shown on a single panel accomplishing several saintly gestures side by side; sixteenth-century illustrations of Ludovico Ariosto represent many scenes from each canto laid out as along a road in receding perspective, in a symbolically spatial diachrony that perhaps constitutes the original “time-line.”⁸ (It might be said that the comic strip reestablished sequential pictorial narrative and, by imbedding words—principally dialogue—redefined the traditional relationship of text and illustration.) It is true, of course, that a picture is never *read* in an absolutely synchronic manner. To some degree the eye and mind assimilate its various aspects sequentially,⁹ but the ordering of that perceptive sequence is not a narrative order, and the quasi-narrative aspects of the image’s meaning must be reconstructed from the semiotic data that at first may seem randomly dispersed.

Owen Holloway puts it this way: “It is a prerequisite of good illustration to bring together elements which perhaps were never together or even present in so many words in the text of the book. Coupled with this, it is the function of montage to break down a scene into features which are then presented in an order, and with a particular emphasis, and on the particular scale, that the narrative of the illustrator himself requires” (1969: 30). This artistic license with respect to the diachronic text (though hardly a “prerequisite” of “good” illustration) is unquestionably an aspect of the illustrator’s repertory. Nonetheless, the analytic principle being put to use here, even though positively intended, is inapplicably vague (“*an* order,” a “*particular* scale,” and so forth) as is the definition of *montage*; while one may concede that it commendably evokes the ephemeral experience of illustrations, this terminology, partly judgmental and normative, cannot be applied objectively to their description. Wendy Steiner has drawn renewed

attention to the means whereby the artist, whether illustrator or history painter, “represents” action in a static medium by catching “the crucial moment when all the past and future of the act are implied” (1982: 148). On another level, an illustration can entail condensation of a purely *symbolic* type: for example, representation of Julie’s bed and room in the fifth illustration to *Julie (L’inoculation de l’amour)* recalls the earlier night Saint-Preux spent with her there (the only other time he ever entered this room, but not an element in the sequence of illustrations) and simultaneously foreshadows Julie’s deathbed, subject of the twelfth plate (Labrosse 1985: 229). Such coherent sequences of illustrations, which seem to become established only in the 1750s, may, in Jean Sgard’s view, owe much both to William Hogarth’s “Progress” series and to the copious illustrations in both English and French editions of Samuel Richardson (1986: 32–35). He is quite right to emphasize the particular interior dynamics of such a *suite*, which can in many instances serve as subject of rewarding study in its own right.

A major distinction between a “narrative” painting such as Jean Honoré Fragonard’s *Corésus et Callirhoé* (one of Diderot’s principal examples in his *Salons*) and a literary illustration is that the latter is physically juxtaposed with its prescribed textual environment, and this proximity imposes the dominant role of text to which the figural must be related. Text dominates also in history painting, but it is not an immediate given; it must either be identified by the title, or by intuitable or reconstructible data coded in the image. Every representational piece of art has some kind of intertext, and this intertext, if not overtly narrative, at least takes on, in the process of deployment, a narrative form. Take, for instance, the following description by Mary Sheriff of a “non-narrative” allegory of fall by Fragonard: “[a] young woman *gathers fruit* in her apron and *squeezes* a bunch of grapes over a child lying in the grass below,” who moreover “is *animated* by the spray” (1990: 95, 111; my italics). The verbs here call attention to at least a minimal narrative, and they are surely essential to understanding of the painting. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry made a simple but dramatic demonstration of this relation in the first page of *Le petit prince*, where he presented a childish image in the form of a riddle, looking something like a hat. What the drawing represents, it is explained—its text, in other words—is a boa that has swallowed an elephant:¹⁰ a static image—seemingly a still life—that instead implies a narrative content.

Still life defies this tendency by rejecting, as Norman Bryson puts it, the narrative sentence as characterized in grammatical analogy by the verb: “still-life knows only nouns, adjectives, and conjunctions, and by insist-

ing on these and only these remains permanently below the threshold of meaning" (1981: 23). Such a characterization has for our purposes the advantage of rendering immediately evident why it is that *things* have so much less important a place (and still life, *a fortiori*, none at all) in illustration than in painting. Illustration stays close to narrative; even though it must necessarily freeze motion, it wants dynamic content—in Bryson's terms, implied "verbs." And given its small format, once the active agents are accommodated, there is little space left for inanimate accessories.

If the "subject" is immediately recognizable, on the other hand, that means that the image is capable of regenerating a text unaided in the mind of the viewer, a situation that Alain Bergala calls *effet-fiction*: "the recognition of a situation or a scene belonging to the fictional collective imagination" (1977: 16).¹¹ The biblical, mythical, or historical scene is the paradigmatic instance of this operation, though there have been many paintings whose subjects remain open to dispute. Seventeenth-century treatises on painting stressed the painter's need for a vast literary culture to serve as a repertory of unambiguous reference; according to Roger de Piles, "Invention . . . must not keep the viewer's mind in suspense through any obscurity," and traditionally coded *attributes* are the conventional means of assuring such identification.¹² Abbé Jean-Baptiste Du Bos asserted as early as 1719 that this was sometimes a source of significant misunderstanding, or at best limited pleasure, at the salons: "I have several times been surprised that painters who have such a stake in making the characters they use to move us recognizable, and who must encounter so many difficulties in making them so with only a paintbrush to assist them, do not always accompany their historical paintings with a short inscription. Three-quarters of the viewers, who moreover are quite capable of giving the work its due, are not well enough read to guess the subject of the painting." One can then say that the picture "speaks a language they don't understand." This constraint distinguishes painting from poetry, for the poet can always introduce an unfamiliar subject gradually; the painter therefore "must never undertake to treat a subject drawn from some little-known work; he must insert on his canvas only characters that everyone, at least those before whom his painting will be shown, has heard of." It is for this reason that most European painting remains faithful to biblical subjects, and after that to Greek and Roman history and fable—"subjects generally known" (Du Bos 1770: 1:90–91, 108–10).

In salon painting, the viewer most often has the support of at least a title—sometimes one that, in the absence of such a conventional historical referent, must compensate for that lack by providing a quick synopsis of

the sense of the action. There are examples of this among Greuze's paintings, precisely because, although "for the *tableau* to work . . . it must be completely legible," they are often not "historical" in the traditional way.¹³ Antoinette Ehrard (1986) has shown how ambiguous certain of his best-known paintings might easily become if the titles happened to be reversed. A remark of Mark Twain's is pertinent here: "A good legible label is usually worth, for information, a ton of significant attitude and expression in a historical picture. In Rome, people with fine sympathetic natures stand up and weep in front of the celebrated 'Beatrice Cenci the Day Before Her Execution.' It shows what a label can do. If they did not know the picture, they would inspect it unmoved, and say, 'Young Girl with Hay Fever; Young Girl with Her Head in a Bag.'"¹⁴ In other words, in the absence of the correct text, the painting is misunderstood, which means that a different (erroneous) text is generated; for "Young Girl with Hay Fever" still implies a text, although not the one historically intended. Of course, in Twain's ironic construction, it would be equally valid. Mitchell quotes this passage rather to show Twain's skepticism about "the notion that painting is capable of expressing some invisible essence." Insofar as any attempt to define the content of such pictorial essence would itself be a process of exploration with words, the search for a textual representation equivalent to the visual one, it could quite well be argued that that comes down to essentially the same point I am making here.¹⁵ But it is also true, as Mitchell points out, that the label is worth little without the picture, which is "a confluence of pictorial and verbal traditions" (1986: 42).

The title is in effect a proposition about the picture—often, perhaps, a truncated proposition. "There is no message in any medium that asserts without some help from the external context, nor does any message ever come to us free of the contamination of other media and contexts. It may be that pictures require more help from the outside than verbal messages, or at least that this is the case with painting produced in the iconographic tradition" (Steiner 1982: 162).¹⁶ Mary Sheriff's analysis of the *Progress of Love* sequence at the Frick Collection is appropriately posed in just such terms: "Reading *The Progress of Love* is problematic because the subject is artist-created, that is, not supported by a literary text. Viewers cannot know the narrative outside of the painting(s), and they are called upon to fabricate, rather than to remember, a story line" (1990: 65–66). In the event, she goes on to show that there may be no fixed story line at all, such that the ensemble of four paintings can be read creatively by the viewer.¹⁷ Diderot is in fact invoking this same principle in a different way when he says: "Every piece of sculpture or painting must be the expression of a great

maxim, a lesson for the viewer; otherwise it is mute.”¹⁸ The “maxim” in his formula is, precisely, a textual referent: the meaning of the tableau is rendered through the mediation of a text, and “mute” then basically means devoid of text—in other words, meaningless.

Deprived of diachronic repetition (essential to verbal narrative) by imposition of the rigorously logical singleness of Renaissance perspective, painting had recourse to other devices that left it only “weakly narrative” (Steiner 1988: 23), whence perhaps a heightened dependency upon historical subjects that can implicitly restore the sense of linear sequence. (Films, I might point out, are in contrast strongly narrative: their technical substratum itself consisting of repetitions, there is no static equivalent for many terms used to describe filmic treatments, for example, the way a camera is said to “dwell” on a face or object. Paintings and engravings can do nothing but dwell.)¹⁹ Nonetheless, she exaggerates this weakness by underestimating the narrative role of discourse *about* painting: for interpretation constantly regenerates the narrative implied in painting, a phenomenon that she in fact illustrates again and again. The viewer’s ability to *tell the story* represented in the picture constitutes the proof that there is one, even in classical history painting where the diachronic elements that underpin “strong” narrative are lacking. The animation attributed to certain ostensibly narrative works²⁰ is itself, in truth, an effect of dynamic interpretive discourse, the endless verbal energizing of critical description. For as Steiner says elsewhere, “One would not object that the statements generated by a verbal text are not part of its meaning, so why should one do so of a painting?” (1982: 162).

If illustrations are thought of as that form of representation that refers simultaneously to the world (for recognition of its visual signs) and to text, then all history paintings are in this sense *illustrations* of a virtual text.²¹ The difference with illustration *stricto sensu* is that the narrative text is already a specific given, along with the image. There is an important distinction to be made between textual *environment* in this general sense, intrinsic to the possibility of a discourse about images, and the presence of direct textual *support*, to which I shall return later. In the history of painting this difference is sometimes problematic because of the questionable status of titles, which, even in cases where they have since become traditional, may, particularly in the case of older paintings, have been originated by a collector, auctioneer, or curator rather than the artist. Such interventions, however, further testify to the institutional and cultural necessity of such a text. Even “Untitled” is, after all, a text and influences the way the viewer looks at the painting.

In the case of literary illustrations, the relevant textual environment is almost always manifest, although when the physical metonymy is compromised, as when plates are detached from their original book or mislocated by a negligent binder, they can become quite enigmatic. (It must be remembered that copper plates, requiring a different kind of press, were always printed separately from the text sheets—always *hors texte*—and had to be tipped into the books when bound. Often instructions were incorporated into the typeset pages as to where these plates should be placed in binding, but errors were common.) Similarly, when a lengthy and much subdivided text contains numerous unlabeled frontispieces, identification of the subject of each can be, at best, delayed, and sometimes quite problematic; a good example of this is *L'Astrée* of 1733 (§81), whose dozens of plates often correspond confusingly to passages buried deep in secondary narratives. In most instances encountered after midcentury, however, the neighboring presence of appropriate text makes the support readily available even when the plate bears no caption; conversely, when present, the caption brings explicit and focused reinforcement amid the potentially vast range of the text as a whole.

Specific Attributes of the Medium

Artistic factors, to be sure, must ever be kept in mind; engraving as an art form does not exist independently of other plastic arts. There was no tradition yet established for painting literary subjects, aside from biblical, Greek, Latin, and a few other epic subjects that were subsumed under the rubric of “history” painting; the practice of painting fictional subjects does not flourish until the nineteenth century. On the other hand, in treating only book illustrations I am leaving aside not only original independent prints but a large mass of engravings dedicated to reproduction of paintings, which played a major role in the dissemination of works of art and are inevitably judged mostly in terms of the adequacy of that reproduction.

No visual art has any direct equivalent for representation of the linguistic first person. A first-person narrator must be transposed, viewed from without, in order to be included at all. In this regard, there can be no more than a rudimentary “narratology” of illustrations, focalization being apparently limited to two gross categories according to the presence or absence of the protagonist. If he is not in the picture, then we can sometimes imagine that it represents *what he sees*—provided, that is, that the *text* confirms that he is a viable witness. In every other case we can say little else than that it is the reader who “sees.” Pictures of all kinds thus derive

from plot rather than the narrative situation; or if the poet is portrayed, it is because of an extradiegetic transposition, where he becomes qua narrator part of the illustrator's plot rather than producing his own. Even if in language the focalization is on the character, causing us to "see" through his eyes, in the illustration we must generally see *him*, not what he says and not just what he sees. The "double register" whereby a first-person homodiegetic²² narrator plays two roles (past and present) while seeming to speak with one voice cannot be projected visually by any conventional device.²³

Focalization operates in a rather different manner in the cinema, and for this reason the descriptive tools developed for analysis of the (paradigmatically male) gaze in film are imperfectly applicable here. The camera's eye, for example, is not infrequently identified with the gaze of the protagonist, which can thus encounter that of the woman looking *back* to signify her consciousness of being looked at. And whether the male is *doing* the looking or *seen* in the act of looking, the situation, essentially dynamic, can be captured through various (often moving) angles. These techniques have no parallel in illustration, not only because it is static but because its "gaze" must complement in one way or another the narrative voice in the text. It is not an independent, integral, intensive medium as is film.

There are other important features peculiar to this single art. Literary illustrations, being almost always much smaller (but with notable exceptions, such as Oudry's folio illustrations of Jean de La Fontaine's *Fables*), are also, of necessity, much more stylized. The fact that engravings therefore contain far less information than paintings offers advantages when it comes to the business of interpreting them, for they must depend upon less subtle effects, even formalized codes. For the same reason, they are never treated as "realistic"—a notion that, in Norman Bryson's analysis, depends upon "an instituted difference between figure and discourse" (1981: 12).

Bryson's theory illuminates not only the bases of mimetic art conventions but indirectly the rather special, even anomalous, place of engraving and illustration in comparison with the painting tradition. For "realism is not something that is established by an identity between image and world (Essential Copy), but by an . . . excess of the image over discourse": in other words, a surfeit of figural information over text, thanks in part to such data-rich tools as color and perspective. The density of image saturates the eye and mind, and "the textuality of the image recedes before the even spreading of a connotation which is not experienced as *intelligible*, but *sensory*" (1981: 18). Thus, to a mimetic view of the history of art, "the painting of realism is seen as a progressive liberation from discourse

as the technology of painting permits ever closer approximation towards the Essential Copy" (27). It will be immediately evident that this could not describe engraving, which, by virtue of its limitations in medium and dimensions, cannot manage to supercharge the image so greatly that figure overwhelms the discourse. Engraving remains at all stages in its history intimately tied to and semantically determined by text; in the case of literary illustration this vital dependency is even more obviously inherent.

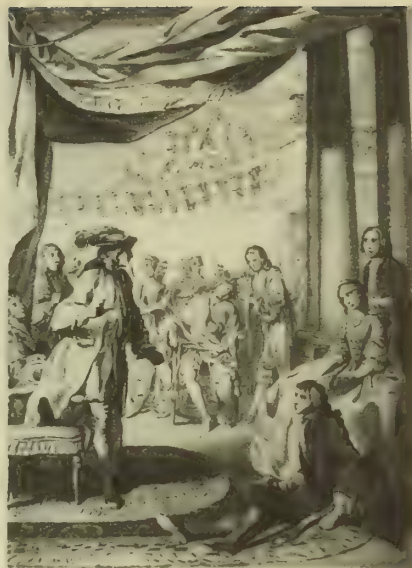
Conversely, engravings are—and this is perhaps their most distinctive feature in æsthetic considerations—relatively free from the imposed theoretical constraints of imitation. Even in the neoclassical period it seems to have been conceded that engravings can *represent* without necessarily depending in order to do so upon the creation of *illusion*; rarely was it argued that they can aspire to illusion except in the very limited and formal sense that they conform to certain representational norms, for example, the rules of perspective. Painting is "an art which through lines and colors represents on a smooth and unified surface all visible objects. The painter imitates or counterfeits nature through the use of colors"; engraving, in contrast, does not imitate objects themselves, one of whose essential attributes is color, but only their highlights and shadows.²⁴ Although it might not immediately be obvious, that is a highly privileged situation for any artistic medium in an era where illusion was arguably more crucial to the notion of æsthetic response than was reference. Or more exactly, engraving is not held to be apt for imitation of *nature*. When it imitates *painting*—and in many discussions, reproduction of art through engraving is the only aspect of the subject considered—a different ontology is assumed, which may justify positing a virtual equivalence, at least in terms of the artistic skill manifested, of plate and painting,²⁵ and even, at least in one apologist's view, with respect to color; Louis Doissin says in *La gravure, poème*: "the crowning merit of the engraver, his greatest glory is to render all the effects of the more varied coloration in an art that allows of only two colors, black and white, such that the illusion is perfect, and that objects are not more true in the painting than in the engraving" (§19: 23). Few appear to share Doissin's judgment that such power might in exceptional cases extend even to representation of objects directly.²⁶ It does not, in any event, characterize the illustration of books, which he refers to merely in passing as an "agrément" capable of rendering gesture and movement (78–79).

Doubtless one can and does, as a matter of practice, make implicit qualitative distinctions among artists and among particular engravings. Aside from the fine tooling that sets the best plates apart from the cruder ones,

there are varying strengths of design, and I think one can also say strengths of concept; the two may often coincide. Let me offer a simple contrast between two Shakespeare illustrations by Francis Hayman, engraved by Gravelot, who spent much of his early career in London. His plate of Lady Macbeth's "Out, damned spot!" scene (act 5, scene 1) is what I would call a weak illustration (figure 1.1). It is certainly neither crude nor awkward, it is striking in its perspective, and it is hard to see any way in which it disputes the text: Lady Macbeth enters, observed by a gentlewoman and doctor, carrying a taper, which in the illustration she has just put down; there is even a noticeable spot on the back (!) of her left hand. But it has little to "say"; it is thin on content; with its dominance of straight lines and stick characters, it is also visually prim and static. His *Hamlet*, on the other hand, is strong: by that I mean not principally that it is busier—although it is that, describing in some detail the well-populated "Mousetrap" scene (figure 1.2)—but that it more clearly tries to assume the challenge of the play's complexity: the players, the king's reaction, Hamlet's odd stance, the different and echoing levels of staging, and so forth. This it does not through facial expression (engravings on this small scale usually cannot achieve much in the way of facial detail on full figures, and close-ups are unknown to this medium), nor by grandness of gesture, but by placement and interplay of characters. We not only know what is the precise point in the action, but we grasp as well something of its complicated interworkings and of the characters' relations, which escape completely in the former example.

But illustrations have distinct limitations, and not just ones of scale. Format is one constraint: paintings, and the engravings that reproduce them, are generally wider than they are high, and their content is organized in function of that horizontal "stage"; literary illustrations, if they are full-page plates, are almost without exception vertical. And although it is true that in some ways "an illustration breaks the perceptual field of a page, disjoining itself from typography particularly when it uses the devices of perspective" (Steiner 1982: 154), it is also in certain ways integrated into the book format: illustrations are almost without exception framed, whether ornamentally or by a simple black line, as if to underscore their "pageness," their formal congruency to the pages of text that they parallel and, by connotation, to assert the mutual adequacy of the visual and verbal.

It would be difficult to infer humor or irony from an engraving in the absence of any sort of caption, except to the extent that it may represent a situation so incongruous that one could hardly imagine the originating



1.1 *Macbeth*, act 5, scene 1. Hayman/Gravelot (§75: 5:1).

1.2 *Hamlet*, act 3, scene 7. Hayman/Gravelot (§75: 3:7).

text's not harboring an ironical intent—for example, the patently preposterous scene for canto 37 of Ariosto's *Roland furieux*, which cries out for (verbal) explanation (figure 1.3). The text says: "The women were seated on the ground, and dared not rise; for this position was the only means their modesty had of veiling them from view"; the reason for their embarrassing posture is that a misogynistic tyrant has had their skirts cut off "so as to reveal what modesty and nature are careful to hide" (§2: 4: 59–60). In the case of Hogarth, according to Bryson's analysis, irony is possible because of starkly contrasting levels of reading, a process that is no less textual in essence.²⁷ Political cartoons, the commonest use of humor in line-drawing, always were and still are entirely dependent upon verbal support.

Whiteness, one of the most universal signifiers of feminine beauty throughout the classical period, cannot effectively be rendered in engraving except by scarcity of lines, which also, especially in small plates, simultaneously weakens the modeling of the flesh. Light and shadow, as Claude Labrosse remarks (1985: 216), are the essential medium both of the engraving's spatialization and its elementary symbolic material. Painting, in contrast, can make whiteness very striking with no loss of texture. On another front, neither painting nor engraving have ever been success-

1.3 Ariosto, *Roland furieux*, canto 37.
Cochin/Ponce (§2).



ful at representing tears, although they have recourse to other means of manifesting grief; most of the tearful scenes one can think of in painting are quite stylized versions of biblical passages that are well known to the viewer and, like the crucifix, easily identified (and identified with), regardless of their proximity to realist norms. In illustration engraving, where the dimensions of the medium prevent encoding of much detail in a facial expression, emotions are not generally the focus, or if so, they must be coded primarily in gesture.

Reading Engravings

What, asked Roland Barthes in 1964, is the signifying structure of “illustration”? “Does the image duplicate some of the text’s information, through a phenomenon of redundancy, or does the text add previously unknown information to the image?” (1982: 30). It is useful, as Ralph Cohen was pointing out about the same time, to conceive the illustration

as figuring in some ways a reading of the text, one that like all readings is neither limitative nor definitive; thus, illustrations are "significant for criticism because they supplement the remarks of critics" (1964: 288). This analogy has a further structural justification in that, as Claude Labrosse points out in his discussion of *Julie*, the plate visually objectivizes a scene for an unrepresented, untextual observer who might also be a reader (1985: 232). Alain-Marie Bassy has formulated incisively this critical function of engraving: "It deflects, and arrests if needed, the text's possible signifieds. It gives an immediate account of one of its modes of reading" (1984: 159). Its ultimate effect may be a sophistication and enrichment of reading as well as of critical discourse.²⁸ Although this capturing of a certain possible meaning appears at first a beneficial function, it exerts an independent and possibly insidious influence on the memory: "Far from rivaling the text, the image, by pretending to be subordinate, complements, amplifies, deforms, and sometimes corrupts it." For the illustration has a conditioning power that is not easily, if at all, overcome. People seem to recall easily which texts read in their youth were illustrated, and these images tend subsequently to prove indissociable from the text.²⁹ Such endemic complementarity is widely accepted as proper where illustrations closely associated with the original creations, as were those of *Alice in Wonderland* or *Le petit prince*, are concerned. But there are much more disturbing precedents to weigh in the balance as well: it is questionable whether any reader of François Rabelais or Charles Perrault since Gustave Doré has been able to escape the overwhelming influence—arguably quite foreign to the author and perhaps even fatal to the understanding of his spirit—of his canonical (the word is not too strong in this instance) illustrations. The pressure such images exert on subsequent illustrators, when these can come into being at all, is no less real.

The praxis upon which my own discussion is based is as much the result of a degree of disappointment with attempts to construct a theory of reading of illustrations as it is a positive affirmation of their value and importance. Let me illustrate the problem briefly by citing a couple of examples from Owen Holloway, who has made some valiant efforts to cut to the heart of the matter:

The convention of black and white exists to simplify the terms of the composition by contrasts and simplifications in the medium, which are the equivalent of the way the mind itself selects in order to make sense of a scene. The elements laid down by the text are reduced to the common denominator of a visual and psychological impression: the *movement* of

light and shadow (to use a term of the period) constituted a series of fugitive impressions, subjectively true, corresponding to the actual diffused perception of things, and bringing into play a world of the imagination. (1969: 13)

Anyone as enamored as I of the charms of line engravings will be inclined to applaud the intuition at work in this passage, but its formulation is finally quite inadequate. The material medium is posited as analogous to a semiotic process (white and black : simplified contrasts : the way the mind works), begging the question of how one is to imagine the mediation from one to the other. Nor is “movement,” whether derived from the period under study or not, a satisfactory tool of analysis, closely tied as it is to subjective impression. No one doubts that there can be a series of impressions, or that imagination plays a role; but to what “actual diffused perception” can these be said rigorously to correspond? While the eye, as he remarks further on, “can be made to pass fleetingly from one thing to another, to relate them as they can then be felt to exist” (14), the dependence upon feeling too easily induces the viewer to confuse metaphor and data.

Holloway goes on to sketch a theory of how an engraving is read, by reference to a Jean Michel Moreau plate for a song from Jean Benjamin de Laborde,³⁰ whose specific subject little matters for present purposes: “Pictorially the main feature is the unimportance of the charming figures themselves. There is no dualism between humanity and the setting, for it is not a solid scene at all, so much as a multitude of points of relative luminosity which lead the eye delightedly here, there and everywhere and at last into the far distance” (1969: 40). Subjective delight aside, this seems to mean essentially that the plate contains a variety of planes (the opposite of a “solid scene”?), and that, the foreground being, as is customary, close to the center, it is assimilated first by the viewer and the background only subsequently. But when the center plane is occupied by a more distant subject, as is the case of Charles Eisen’s *Le faucon* (Holloway 1969: fig. 27), it can attract the eye before the “foreground,” now on the periphery of the picture.³¹ Yet I am uncomfortable even with referring to what “the eye” does; strictly speaking, such language has its place only in scientific studies of perception—for example, the recording of eye movements scanning a given object—which can indeed be performed, but are not my subject any more than they are Holloway’s. Moreover, the illusion of correlating one’s own cognitive process with something like “movement” leads Holloway to refer to the “almost dizzy motion,” indeed to the motion of one particular statue that sets it “spinning,” in a plate that to another viewer

might appear somewhat static (42).³² In my mind, lacking such specific information on the *process* of understanding, one is on safer ground to speak of the signifying elements, for which the sequence of assimilation is not particularly crucial.³³ Not all aspects of a picture need be seen at the same first glance, and certainly they are not all of the same size, but—to the extent that they can be identified at all—they are all equally present, and one can evoke them in some kind of rational (not perceptual) order without doing violence to any.

In any case, the illustration itself must be decoded and assimilated by the reader; and whether it is read before or after, it cannot be read simultaneously with nor even independently of the passage to which it corresponds.³⁴ The conventional device for asserting that link is the legend (a component of engravings that is scarcely if ever acknowledged by Holloway), which may be a quotation from the text itself, thus galvanizing an ostensibly rigorous correspondence, or some sort of paraphrase of its plot or moral lesson: for example, “L’héroïsme de la valeur,” caption of the second of twelve illustrations for *Julie*, is not a direct borrowing from the text of the novel and thereby constitutes supplementary text.³⁵ In the case of *Julie*, both types exist and both are prescribed by the author. Strict application of an encapsulated quotation to an illustration becomes a common method in the 1770s.³⁶

The twelfth and last of the *Julie* series bears no legend (also by Rousseau’s specification), yet there is still text: not only the episode in the novel to which the figure corresponds but also Rousseau’s written instructions to the artist. By looking just at the illustration (figure 1.4), one easily recognizes Claire’s gesture at the story’s end where she definitively confirms Julie’s death by placing a veil over her slightly decomposed face and exclaiming: “Maudite soit l’indigne main qui jamais lèvera ce voile!” [Cursed be the unworthy hand that ever lifts this veil!] (part 6, letter 11). And indeed this fulfills Rousseau’s specifications, which read in part: “Claire est debout auprès du lit, le visage élevé vers le ciel, et les yeux en larmes. Elle est dans l’attitude de quelqu’un qui parle avec véhémence. Elle tient des deux mains un riche voile en broderie, qu’elle vient de baiser et dont elle va couvrir la face de son amie” [Claire is standing beside the bed, her face lifted toward heaven and her eyes in tears. Her posture indicates that she is speaking forcefully. She holds in her two hands a richly embroidered veil, which she has just kissed and with which she is about to cover her friend’s face].³⁷ A degree of discordance is nonetheless detectable here in that Rousseau now says Claire is *about to* pose the veil: he has in fact misread his own novel, in which the veil is placed *before* Claire begins to speak. There is

1.4 Rousseau, *Julie ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, part 6, letter 11. Gravelot/Le Mire (§71).



thus a sense in which, strictly speaking, the engraving does not “literally” illustrate any passage actually in the book.

Now, of course, one could hold that Rousseau’s private instructions to the engraver have no particular bearing on the case; but that is not quite satisfactory either, because with typical ambivalence Rousseau decided to publish *that* text, too, along with the illustrations:

On ne saurait donc entrer dans un trop grand détail quand on veut exposer des sujets d’estampes, et qu’on est absolument ignorant dans l’art. Au reste, il est aisé de comprendre que ceci n’avait pas été écrit pour le public; mais en donnant séparément les estampes, on a cru devoir y joindre l’explication. (lxxx)

[One cannot go into too much detail when the objective is to describe the subjects of the plates in the complete ignorance of that art. It is, moreover, easily understood that this was not written for the public; but since the plates are being published separately, we felt the explanation should be included.]

That is in part because, having once elaborated his imagined illustrations, Rousseau could not help but find the realization disappointing. He was in particular dissatisfied with the rendition of Claire, whom he characterized for the artist by “un désordre dans toute la personne qui peigne la profonde affliction sans malpropreté, et qui soit touchant, non risible” [a disorder about her whole person that represents deep affliction without dirtiness, and is moving rather than amusing]. That is expecting a lot of affective communication in the tiny face of a book plate:³⁸ what Rousseau really wants, it would seem, is a painting, where the possibilities of expressive nuance would be considerably greater. In lieu of his mental image, he found, in the proof he was first sent, a Wolmar who “semble un vieux apothicaire et Claire une grosse joufflue de servante qui tient un torchon. Il faut absolument remédier à cela et si cela ne se peut j’aimerais mieux supprimer l’estampe” [looks like an old apothecary and Claire like a heavy servant with round cheeks holding a dishtowel. That absolutely must be fixed, and if it can’t be I would rather do without the plate].³⁹

The point is not, of course, that Rousseau’s “mistake” is terribly important, but that it is telling; it “illustrates” both the mediation of another text between book and image, and the futility of ever looking for absolute coincidence of a visual image with a verbal one. In a sense, the discrepancy in question *does not make any difference*, and in another the whole issue is one of difference. As Edward Hodnett puts it, “no matter how plainly representational illustrations may try to be, they are always in some degree supplementary rather than reproductive images. The text frequently does not describe in full detail the scene chosen, may not really describe it at all, and literally cannot match a picture in concreteness.”⁴⁰ Indeed, only admixtures of representation and symbolization *can* be encountered, for ultimately there is no possibility of unmitigated correspondence of the visual and verbal. Christian Michel’s distinction between “narrative” and “allegorical” illustration is thus potentially fallible.⁴¹ Even if “denotative” illustration has largely displaced allegory by about 1770 (Sgard 1988: 285), the frontispiece for *Les liaisons dangereuses* in 1796 (figure 1.5) can in no way directly represent action in the novel, given its obvious allegorical ingredients, although it presumably alludes to the moral content of the

story by symbolizing the evil forces (Valmont and Merteuil) treading on virtue (Mme de Tourvel, or perhaps Cécile). The mask, serpent, and lamb do not resemble anything in the story except via the relay of metaphor, whose structure is purely verbal. The corresponding plate for volume two of the same edition (figure 1.6), which appears at first glance to be a typical allegory, at the same time alludes quite specifically to important elements of the plot: the undoing of Merteuil through Valmont's revelation of her letters even as he lies dying by Danceny's sword. The sword, moreover, occupies the same relative position over Valmont's body as the snake in the first plate, both implying the phallic nature of his life and death.

Moreau's frontispiece for *Julie* is equally complex in a different way (figure 1.7). There is no identifiable action from the novel here, the artist considering himself no longer bound by Rousseau's expressed wishes concerning either subject or caption. The neutral *on* designating the character in this legend—"Aidé de la sagesse, on se sauve de l'amour dans les bras de la raison" [With wisdom's help, one flees from love into the arms of reason]—is represented by an abstract male figure having no special

1.5 Laclos, *Les liaisons dangereuses*, frontispiece vol. 1. Monnet/Langlois (§41).

1.6 Laclos, *Les liaisons dangereuses*, frontispiece vol. 2. Monnet/Patas (§41).





1.7 "With wisdom's help, one flees from love into the arms of reason." Frontispiece for Rousseau, *Julie ou la nouvelle Héloïse*. Moreau/Duclos (§72: 2:1).

connection to Julie or Saint-Preux. Reason, receiving him in her arms, is not iconically distinctive, though she holds a bit (to bridle him with) in her right hand; Sagesse (Minerva), who fends off Cupid and his helpers, is more specific.⁴² The text of the legend itself, although it is not to be found in the novel, is not only aphoristic in a way that is typical of the characters' style; it also makes use of terms and concepts closely approaching theirs. Compare, for example, the use of the same key words in a passage written by Milord Edouard:

Une *flamme* ardente et malheureuse est capable d'absorber pour un temps, pour toujours peut-être, une partie de ses facultés; mais elle est elle-même une preuve de leur excellence, et du parti qu'il en pourrait tirer pour cultiver la *sagesse*: car la sublime *raison* ne se soutient que par la même vigueur de l'âme qui fait les grandes *passions*, et l'on ne sert dignement la *philosophie* qu'avec le même feu qu'on sent pour une maîtresse. (*Julie ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, part 2, letter 2; emphasis added)

[A burning and unfortunate *passion* might absorb for a time, perhaps

forever, a part of her faculties; but it is itself a proof of their excellence, and of the profit he could draw from them to cultivate *wisdom*: for the sublimity of *reason* is sustained only by the same vigor of soul that makes for great *passions*, and *philosophy* can be worthily served only with the same ardor one feels for his mistress.]

The interplay between these terms is of great thematic importance—for instance, the question of whether *sagesse* and *amour* are compatible—and there are many passages (all in the novel's first half) where combinations of *sagesse*, *amour*, and *raison* are to be found in close proximity. The legend, drawing on the rhetoric of the first half, nonetheless points strongly toward the message of the second, where *sagesse* and *amour* are more or less diametrically opposed. Discursively, therefore, if not figuratively, the illustration is closely linked to the story and even more so to the thesis of the novel.

Claude Labrosse further evokes with reference to *Julie* the matter of thematic elements that *cannot* be represented in engravings, from the diaphanous veil, on a relatively simple technical level, to phantasms and obsessions. Since there are dramatic and emotive values expressed in language (in particular the passion of *words*) that thus cannot readily serve as the subjects of illustrations, he refers paradoxically but appropriately to corresponding images as “la parole déçue de la fiction” (1985: 235–38).

Reference and Allegory

It must be conceded, too, that we have difficulty assimilating fully the meaning of such double allusions, to the extent that we no longer possess as thoroughly as did their original viewers and readers an internalized repertory of traditional allegorical knowledge—and the classical languages on which they depended⁴³—then sometimes referred to as *iconologie*. The series by Charles Nicolas Cochin and Gravelot called *Almanach iconologique*⁴⁴ provides a reminder of the persistence and specificity of such associations. As Georges May has remarked, “Iconology has recourse to the profusion of symbols and the complication and unexpectedness of their combinations. The work of art can ultimately turn into a logograph or a rebus.”⁴⁵ Especially to us it is likely so to appear. Alain Guillermin equally observes that the symbols “have been lost and forgotten along with the cultural world that produced them. . . . Now we can understand only those emblems of allegories that are based on metaphorical transcriptions whose key our ancestors have bequeathed us, or ones that are transparent.”⁴⁶

There are many lessons to be gleaned from a work such as the Gravelot-

Cochin *Iconologie*, especially since the text is so carefully glossed and the engravings so skillfully detailed. One, most interesting in the light of the Derridean elaboration of the notion of "trace," is that *Mémoire*⁴⁷ is represented holding in her hand neither the pen nor the chisel one might expect,⁴⁸ but rather a burin: "C'est dans le cerveau que se gravent les conceptions, et c'est pour exprimer cette pensée qu'on a fait tenir un burin à la *Mémoire*" [It is in the brain that conceptions are engraved, and to express this thought we have placed a burin in Memory's hand]. Copper engraving, not some other form of sculpture or even writing, thus seems (at least to an engraver) the most economical way to express emblematically the role of memory, perhaps because it can capture the *imaging* function of mental "conception" as well as the relationship of memory to *text*.⁴⁹

It may be well to recall in this context the passage in the *Dioptrique* where René Descartes moves from engraving to memory through their common but paradoxical attribute of resemblance:

Even if we think it best, in order to depart as little as possible from received opinions, to admit that the objects of sensation actually do transmit images of themselves to the interior of the brain, we must at least observe that no images have to *resemble* the objects they *represent* in all respects (otherwise there would be no distinction between the object and its image); resemblance in a few features is enough, and very often the perfection of an image depends on its not resembling the object as much as it might. For instance, *engravings*, which consist merely of a little ink spread over paper, *represent* to us forests, towns, men and even battles and tempests. And yet, out of an unlimited number of different qualities that they lead us to conceive [in] the objects, there is not one in respect of which they actually resemble them, except shape. Even this is a very imperfect resemblance; on a flat surface, they represent objects variously convex or concave; and again, according to the rules of perspective, they often represent circles by ovals rather than by other circles, and squares by diamonds rather than by other squares. Thus very often, in order to be more perfect *qua* images, and to represent the object better, it is necessary for the engravings not to resemble it.⁵⁰

Representation is thus distinguished from resemblance, although it continues to depend upon it; and the memory is inscribed in some way analogous to the copper plate, a selective resemblance. *Figure*, the element of resemblance, would seem to designate geometric outline; yet even this immediately runs into trouble because the reduction of nature to two dimensions (via the laws of perspective) makes even geometry a dissembler

as the oval comes to represent a circle better than would a circle. Descartes seems unable fully to resolve this conundrum, but the analogy hereby serves his purposes all the better since he does not want to be forced to explain just how the brain “represents” the memory traces it retains.

Perspective, of course, does underlie our understanding of how what would be distortions *from one angle* become true perceptions from another (the picture viewer’s), but the question of how a painting or *a fortiori* a design can “resemble” nature has given rise to a long controversy. It has been argued that no rigorous parallel being identifiable between nature and image, resemblance is philosophically untenable and visual representation must in consequence be considered, like language, an application of conventional signs. Sir Ernst Gombrich, who long defended this view, has rallied since to the viability of a certain naturalness in the visual sign, to be understood as perceptual *equivalences*. Thus, corresponding ranges in nature and a picture display similar “gradients in the distribution of light,” and even outlines, though doubtless stylized in a way that nature never actually is, nonetheless correspond to *contours* that are the limits of objects detected by movement and contrast (Gombrich 1981: 17). The resemblance of the image to nature, however problematic, is thus of a different kind from its “resemblance” to text. Gombrich may not do justice, however, to their interplay. In commenting upon a Roman mosaic of a dog with the inscription “Cave canem,” Gombrich remarks: “To understand the notice you must know Latin, to understand the picture you must know about dogs” (18). But the meaning of the whole is not simply ‘dog,’ and the dog image has not been understood unless its relation to the text is part of the overall perception; the dog, however immediate its taxonomical identity, is an *illustration*.

The *Iconologie* also provides, under the very rubric “Gravure en taille-douce” (literally, ‘soft’ or copper engraving) a most pertinent instruction on the difference between allegory and reference to reality (figure 1.8). If one compares the content of this plate with the numerous illustrations for the same subject in the *Encyclopédie* (“Planches,” vol. 5), one is struck with both the amount of detail and its accuracy, compressed into so little space; yet this is iconology, not documentation. The truth is that this plate would nonetheless have been totally out of place in the *Encyclopédie*, for a reason so evident it almost escapes notice: it is all but unimaginable that a woman should be working in an engraver’s shop.⁵¹ *La gravure*, however, could not be very well represented by any figure other than female, for reasons almost strictly determined by grammatical gender.⁵² It follows that women play a role in iconology⁵³ roughly proportional to the ratio of femi-



1.8 Copper Engraving,
in *Iconologie par figures*.
Cochin/Gaucher (§37:
2:91).

nine to masculine nouns in the allegorized lexicon; and this has nothing whatever to do with the actual economic role of women in contemporary society. Iconology does not rule out social fact but is not strictly bound by it either.

The appearance of several different articles on allegory in the first volume of the *Encyclopédie* supplement in 1776 suggests the urgency of the subject for contemporary æsthetic thinking. An unsigned article argues that allegory is a visual equivalent of metaphor: “it is a natural sign or an image⁵⁴ that is substituted for the thing designated.” Such substitution is unavoidable for the representation of abstract ideas and prudent with regard to bold ones—“when one cannot present the thing baldly” [quand on n’ose pas présenter nûment la chose].⁵⁵ But it does so through precise

application of metaphorical convention (“an exact relation between image and object”) so as to avoid enigma. Mythological characters are not inherently allegorical but become so in the visual arts,⁵⁶ presumably because of the inevitable metonymic attributes that reduce them to clichés. Jean-François Marmontel refers to pictorial allegories as *emblèmes* (ibid., 302), again suggesting a set of strict correspondences if we judge by Abbé Edme Mallet’s earlier definition—which would apply to the *Iconologie par figures*—of *emblème*: “image or painting which via the representation of some known story or symbol, accompanied by a word or legend, makes us aware of something else or of a moral.” It would seem that in his view, the meaning of the image is more than exhausted by the ample resonance of the verbal support: “the words of the *emblem* alone have a full and complete meaning, and even all the sense and all the meaning that they can have joined to the figure.”⁵⁷ The words themselves, indeed, are more than merely signs pointing to the figure.

Today’s readers are largely unattuned to such codes, insofar as we are no longer imbued with the mythology upon which they largely depended. Looking at Eisen’s illustration of *Héro et Léandre*, we might be surprised at the choice of subject (figure 1.9). Given that in the story Leander drowns in the stormy strait he must cross to visit Hero, after which the heroine casts herself into the sea, it certainly appears that the artist has thrown away great dramatic possibilities in favor of an undynamic love allegory. The first factor to remember, however, is that the contemporary reader was probably aware in advance of the story’s content and that in consequence the tragic ending is already implied in this scene, which, like a Racinian plot, depends for its effect not on surprise but on the ominousness of fatality. Second, he would understand the ominous relevance of the epigraph on the title page:

Quid juvenis, magnum cui versat in ossibus ignem
 Durus Amor? nempe abruptis turbata procellis
 Nocte natat coectâ serus freta: quem super ingens
 Porta tonat coeli, & scopulis illisa reclamant
 Aequora: nec miseri possunt revocare, parentes,
 Nec moritura super crudeli funere virgo.
 (Virgil, *Georg. Lib.* 3.v.258)

[Think of a young man, burning with cruel love to the bone:
 Think of him, late in the blindfold night swimming the narrows
 That are vexed by headlong gales, while above his head the huge
 Gates of heaven thunder and the seas collide with a crash



1.9 Musaeus, *Hero and Leandre*, frontispiece.
Eisen/Duclos (§61).

Against the capes: powerless to recall him his sorrowful parents
And the girl who is soon to die of grief over his body.]⁵⁸

In any case, Eisen's viewer would spontaneously take note of many cues in this engraving: that this is the temple of Venus, whose statue at right is flanked by those of her chief sex symbols, her son Cupid and the billing doves; that the garlands everywhere connote the story's sensual dynamics, as does of course Hero's naked breast. But she is not herself here a lover sacrificing at the altar, but rather a priestess of Venus (as her sash probably indicates) to whom love is strictly forbidden: in this scene Leander, who has come to attend the festival of Venus and Adonis, has just fallen passionately in love with her in defiance of her solemn consecration to virginity.

At the outer limit, where allegory is virtually entire, there are cases that are very nearly intractable today.⁵⁹ A paradigm of both the distinction and the alliance between allegory and illustration is to be found in Romeyn

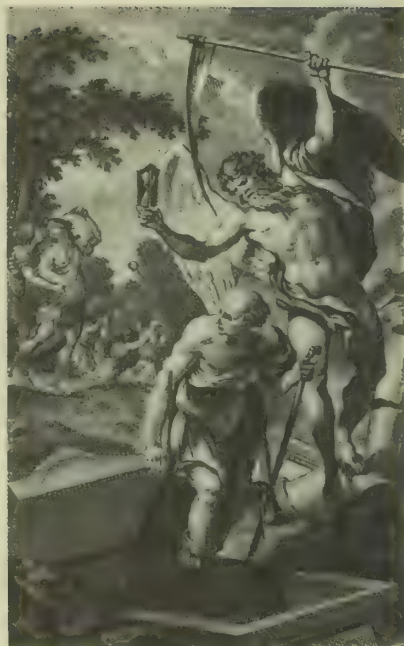
de Hooghe's 1671 frontispiece for *Zayde* (figure 1.10).⁶⁰ It does "illustrate" Mme de Lafayette's novel, but only in the background: some undefinable edifice (one would be tempted to think it a tomb, were that not an unlikely symbol for the work) bears the story's name engraved upon it, along with several symbols of the plot's dominant love interest (Cupids with arrows and flames, billing doves) and a bas-relief that presumably refers in theatrical fashion, as if on a stage, to some scene from the action (it would appear to be a death scene). The entrance to this monument is flanked by the bust of Diana and some other figure difficult to identify. But pride of place is given to an allegory, which, as the banner at the lower left makes clear, concerns not *Zayde* itself but rather Pierre Daniel Huet's *Lettre sur l'origine des romans*, which was published along with it.⁶¹ Probably it is to be correlated quite directly with some assertion of Huet's: but which one? One might expect it to embody Huet's key formula, italicized in his text and explained at length, according to which novels are "feigned histories of amorous adventures, written with art in prose, for the pleasure and instruction of readers" (46–47). It is hard to apply those notions directly to the frontispiece, however, although it may in some way symbolize fiction's didactic function: "since man's mind is the natural enemy of teaching, and love turns it against instruction, it has to be tricked by the lure of pleasure, and his flaws corrected by condemning them in another" (47). Its one nearly unambiguous element is the altar of love at left, identified by the garlands and the two flaming hearts inscribed thereon; what may be doves are found to the left and right of the nude figure.⁶²

Could the allegory refer to Huet's contrasting of poetry and novel? to the admixture of truth and fiction ("lies that resemble truth," 49), or the need for verisimilitude? Or could it refer rather to his concluding remarks on the importance of choosing good novels over bad, or the double moral profit from the reading of novels: "always to find disorder and vice followed by shame and an unhappy outcome, after it has long vainly triumphed; uprightness and virtue on the contrary gloriously exalted after long persecutions" (141)? I can venture only that the allegory has probably to do essentially with the relation of novel to truth and morality. The lyre at lower left alludes to poetry, since Huet's argument derives the *roman* as genre from ancient narrative. It appears to be leaning against a shield, on which is a Roman type of helmet and perhaps some laurel. One would expect Truth to be naked: but which of the naked figures would she most probably be? The dark figure at right with a cudgel may represent Vice (or punishment?). Who is the character in a woman's breastplate being silenced, and why is there a garment (?) draped from his/her right shoulder



1.10 Madame de Lafayette, *Zayde*.
Frontispiece by Romeyn de Hooghe, 1671.

to the other seated figure? The iconic markers, with relation to standard devices, seem insufficient to resolve these ambiguities. Only the figure at left provides more positive clues, yet they do not coincide wholly with any single allegory. If it is a scepter she cradles in her right hand, she could be Virtue;⁶³ if it is a ring that the hand also holds (but I doubt it), it might symbolize marital fidelity, and in that case the altar, wedlock.⁶⁴ If her left hand, however, holds a mirror, then she might instead be Prudence (although Prudence's mirror is supposed to be accompanied by a serpent);⁶⁵ the helmet would tend to reinforce this identification.⁶⁶ None of these ambiguities is resolved, incidentally, by close inspection of the original engraving.



1. 11 "Religion protecting Humanity from Fanaticism," frontispiece for Marмонтel, *Les Incas*. Moreau/de Ghendt and Leveau (§55). 1. 12 "Pleasures in vain recall Old Age to life, while Time urges him on toward the tomb." Lucretius, *De la nature des choses*, book 3. Gravelot/Anon. (§50, book 3).

But that is not to say that all such encoded allusions were evident even to the seventeenth- or eighteenth-century reader, and that is why textual clues often accompanied the engraving. The most prevalent is the legend itself, which supports the image both by containing the profusion of possible visual meanings and, sometimes but not always, by focusing within the overall work the target area of textual correspondence.⁶⁷ Like a title, the legend is a sort of *mode d'emploi* or synoptic set of instructions on how to set about reading the picture; it purports to deliver the topical or allegorical gist, leaving the assimilation of complementary details to the individual's competence. For instance, the Moreau frontispiece for Marмонтel's *Les Incas* seems fairly adequately explained by the caption: "La Religion protégeant l'Humanité contre le Fanatisme" [Religion protecting Humanity from Fanaticism], although there is something of a mixed metaphor involved: the chains and weapons of Fanaticism do suggest imprisonment and torture, but otherwise the disposition of the characters

make the symbolic offense more nearly resemble a rape (figure 1.11). Gravelot's illustration to book three of Lucretius (figure 1.12) similarly has its purely allegorical tenor overtly explicated: "Les plaisirs rappellent en vain la Vieillesse à la vie, le Temps la presse et la mène au tombeau" [Pleasures in vain recall Old Age to life, while Time urges him on toward the tomb]. In many instances, of course, the allegorical allusion is assumed to be patent enough to forgo even such minimal verbal assistance. The caption for the frontispiece of Baculard d'Arnaud's *Nouvelles historiques* (figure 1.13) is merely the title of the collection itself, and the subject seems to relate fairly directly to d'Arnaud's apology in the preface in favor of "historical" fiction: "embellissons la vérité, mais qu'elle ne disparaisse point sous les ornements" [let us embellish truth, but not let her disappear beneath the ornaments]; thus naked Truth, in the act of writing history, supported by father Time, is being garlanded (and thus both beautified and ever so slightly veiled) by Minerva. Understanding the sense of such allegories can nonetheless for us, at times, pose considerable quandaries.



1.13 d'Arnaud, *Nouvelles historiques*, frontispiece. Eisen/de Longueil (§3).

As Gréverand sees it, the function of the legend is to merge with the image: "In the case of a linguistic contribution such as we encounter in captioned illustrations, the meanings carried overlap: verbal signs and pictorial signs together bring to life a single signifying substance" (1983: 193). Such a unified vision must, however, be qualified, first by the highly problematic compatibility of the linguistic and the visual (*une même substance*), and also by the matter of reference to literary context. A good example might be a simple pastoral scene illustrating a song entitled "Les plaintes mutuelles" [Mutual complaints] (figure 1.14).⁶⁸ Both that title and the caption, "Hélas, reprit Colin, / Mon coeur t'adore en vain," reinforce the impression of a rather conventional pastoral couple, separated by some obstacle or unrequited love. This would not quite explain why the girl's hat lies far from her on the ground, rather than by her basket where one might expect it, nor more particularly her partial state of undress; but such details could result from a banal lovers' tussle. In the full textual context, however, the legend is a punch line: following two stanzas of Colin's amorous *complaints*, the song reaches this conclusion:

La belle écoute ses vœux.
L'instant arrive, il devient heureux;
Ses feux
Sont d'abord vifs et pressants,
Bientôt languissants.
Comment, cher amant,
Ton ardeur chancelle,
S'écria-t-elle.
Hélas, reprit Colin,
Mon coeur t'adore en vain;
(Refrain:)
C'est le sort des amours
De se plaindre toujours.

[The fair one hears him out. The moment comes that makes him happy; his passion is first eager and intense, soon abated. How is this, dear lover? Your ardor is wavering, she cries. Alas, replies Colin, my heart adores you, but it is in vain. (Refrain:) It is lovers' fate never to be satisfied.]

Thus is a seemingly innocent caption stood semantically on its head, in a complete narrative- and role-reversal with respect to what it first seemed to imply. The physical act, which appeared perhaps to be in dispute, has in fact already taken place, yet the girl's appetite is not sated; the de-



1. 14 Menilglaise, "Les
plaintes mutuelles."
Le Barbier/Masquelier
(§40: 3:44).

ceptively romantic words refer instead to Colin's temporary fatigue and consequent impotence. The reading of such illustrations can be radically altered by their isolation, not only from each other, but from the complementary text.⁶⁹

A relevant gloss may occur somewhere outside the caption, for example in a preface or liminary poem, although it does not necessarily resolve all the ambiguities. Clément Pierre Marillier's frontispiece for Dorat's "La Fable et la Vérité"⁷⁰ corresponds loosely to the allegory of Dorat's poem, in which Vérité proclaims: "J'existe avant les temps" [I existed before time] and Fable declares of her: "Ton beau miroir est effrayant" [Your beautiful mirror is frightening] (figure 1. 15). There is no mention there, however, of the prism, nor of the putto (unless it is by way of the phrase "La nudité ne sied bien qu'à l'Amour" [Nudity becomes only Love]; nor, more importantly, is there any pictorial equivalent of Vérité's own *verbal* allegory:

Mon front est couronné de rayons prophétiques
Qui percent le sombre avenir,



1. 15 Dorat, *Fables*, frontispiece. Marillier/de Launay (§22). 1. 16 "The necessity of love, or advice to the young." Maréchal, *La journée de l'amour*. Taunay/Anon. (§51).

Et le passé, par leurs reflets magiques,
 Dans un point lumineux au présent vient s'unir.
 (§22: Fable I)

[My brow is crowned with prophetic rays that penetrate the dark future;
 and the past, through their magic reflections, comes to meet the present
 in a luminous point.]

In order to fill in such semiotic gaps there comes into common usage a supplementary category of text frequently called "Explication des figures," inserted at the beginning or end of the illustrated volume. A mediating text, it offers to reconcile such disparities in the reader's understanding by manifesting the "missing" text; in this typical instance, it furnishes a clarification about the gesture of Time, which is dispersing the thick fogs that would shroud Truth, and specifies that Fable's prism serves to soften the glare of Truth's light; meanwhile, Cupid illumines the world in his own way. In the example of Pierre Sylvain Maréchal's *Journée de l'amour*, even the poems, which are pretty clear—for example:

La beauté vous offre une rose
Qu'il faut laisser épanouir;
Amants songez à la cueillir
Le premier jour qu'elle est éclosé.⁷¹

[The fair gives you a rose that you must let bloom; hasten, lovers, to pick it the day it blossoms.]

—apparently did not in the eyes of author or publisher do justice to all the subtle erotic charge encoded in the engravings, which are therefore independently explicated (figure 1. 16):

L'intérieur du temple de l'Amour. On voit deux amants à l'entrée du sanctuaire; le visage de l'Amant peint toute la vivacité de l'amour et du désir; l'Amante a fait un faux pas avant de monter le premier degré; l'Amant la retient et lui vole une rose qu'elle a dans son sein, en lui faisant signe d'en faire un sacrifice à l'Amour, dont il lui montre l'autel. (§51, "Explication des estampes")

[Inside the temple of Venus. Two lovers are seen at the entrance to the sanctuary; on his face is all the eagerness of love and desire; she has stumbled before climbing the first stair; he grasps her and steals a rose from her breast, gesturing to her to sacrifice it to Venus, to whose altar he points.]

For although it is true that pictorial allegory is itself a discourse with its own continuous play of allusion, it is also true that it is always, at every point in history, dependent upon gloss, whether or not that gloss is a typographical accompaniment. That is, although pictorial and verbal allegory can be described in much the same way, their function is not exactly symmetric, for even the visual allegory must pass through—and is, in most instances, demonstrably derived from—the medium of the word.⁷² The collective memory has to be reminded of how allegory works, and this, too, is always done with words.

The proverb "A picture is worth a thousand words" was meant to valorize pictures at the expense of words and was certainly very good for the snapshot industry. But the truth is that the picture is "worth" those thousand (or however many) words *only when you already know the words*. A picture is never viewed without verbal context, and the more that context is complete, the more it "means." There used to be frequent guessing games in popular magazines challenging the reader to identify the subject

of a bizarre photo. It was not, of course, possible; but in fact those pictures, too, had context (they were usually common objects viewed through a powerful microscope). That one learned to recognize, but only thanks to the prompting provided by earlier answers. Really, all this is not very surprising; everything the human race does is verbal, even the pictures it paints, even the pictures it "captures." Art is afloat in a sea of words.

2 *The Dramatic Impulse*

Dramatic tension is a major component of many though certainly not all of the topoi invoked in this study. Although hardly a kind of subject matter in itself—rather a matter of tone and structure applicable to all sorts of material—it is all the more germane in that it corresponds to a marked transformation not just of illustration but of theatrical practice itself in the course of the eighteenth century—a change to which we owe the modern use of the word *drama*, forged from a fusion of classical comedy and tragedy into a domestic sort of tragicomedy that Diderot called *le genre sérieux*.

In many ways the prototype for the illustration of literary works always had been the theater,¹ and much of the early illustration for editions of theatrical works consisted in fairly straightforward depiction of scenes as acted on the stage, depiction sometimes so accurate as to constitute an excellent source of documentation for the historian of theatrical performance.² To this degree the most specific characteristic of theatrical illustration compared to other types is that, in addition to *being* representational, it *refers to* (dramatic) representation. There appeared in both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many elegantly illustrated editions of theatrical works, a tradition to which belong François Boucher's series of plates for Jean Racine and Molière and Moreau's illustrations for the plays of Voltaire. Typically such editions featured a single frontispiece per play, and just as typically the artist sought out for that privileged location the most visually eloquent moment in the text—more often than not a scene from the final act. Eisen's illustration for Jean Mairet's *Sophonisbe* is in this regard paradigmatic, corresponding to the very last lines in the play, accompanying Massinisse's suicide alongside the body of Sophonisbe—whom he himself has poisoned in order to spare her from the humiliation of being delivered up to the Romans (figure 2.1):

Meurs misérable prince, et d'une main hardie,
Ferme l'acte sanglant de cette tragédie.

Il tire le poignard caché sous sa robe.

Sophonisbe en ceci t'a voulu prévenir;
Et puisque tes efforts n'ont pu la retenir,
Donne-toi pour le moins le plaisir de la suivre,
Et cesse de mourir en achevant de vivre.
Montre que les rigueurs du Romain sans pitié
Peuvent tout sur l'amant, et rien sur l'amitié.

Il se tue.

(§54: Act 5, scene 8)

[Die, miserable prince, and with firm hand put an end to this tragedy's bloody act. *He takes the hidden dagger from under his robe.* Sophonisbe wanted to go before you; and since thine efforts could not prevent her, give thyself at least the pleasure of following her, and by ceasing to live, end thy dying. Let the Romans see that their pitiless cruelty was all-powerful against a lover, but nothing worth against a friend. *He kills himself.*]

This is high drama, and there is really nothing much new about such a form of textual representation, which is at once that of a scene, as fiction, and of its possible realization on stage; this despite the fact that the curtain is supposed to fall as Massinisse pronounces the last line, so that the suicide cannot actually be viewed.³ Eisen enhances the theatricality both through gesture (the grieving attendants, the dagger held poised at arm's length) and by an abundance of regal textures (velvet, ermine, silk, and ostrich feathers); a detail as poignant as the dagger tucked into Sophonisbe's belt is not neglected. His rendition is very close in essence to the artistic tradition to which a whole class of "historical" painting belongs, such as Fragonard's *Corésus et Callirhoé*, around which Diderot constructs a dramatic narrative in his *Salon de 1765*.

There is a difference, however, between high drama and domestic (or bourgeois) drama. As the theater itself throughout the century, but especially from 1760 on, moved in the direction of middle- or lower-class domesticity, sentiment, and grandiloquent gesture, so did illustration: not just illustration of theater, but illustration in general, in part because it was an aspect of a global æsthetic evolution but also because a special influence continued to be exercised upon illustration by the theater. Thus, as the stage under the ægis of Diderot in particular adopted the tableau model of scenic composition, its notion of the dramatic scene carried over



2. 1 Mairet, *Sophonisbe*.
Eisen/de Launay (§54).

into all kinds of other literary media. A good painting, said Diderot, should make a good theatrical scene, and a good scene should make a good painting.

Nonetheless, book plates, by dint of formal constraints, lend themselves awkwardly to imitation of authentic stage settings, for their vertical format, in contrast to the dominant horizontal dimension of the stage as of most historical painting, means that they cannot spread out a stage setting in a comparably panoramic manner. Their evolution is thus in some respects necessarily peculiar to their own medium and acts both upon and against what were heretofore, in Michel Melot's description, the important traits of their "language," which "consists in eyes turned aside, or the nonchalance of a hand. When, in the eighteenth century, intimate dramas were to be illustrated, the illustrator had to be convinced that the world of sentiment was as concrete as the world of natural sciences" (1984: 111). While perpetuating that confidence in the visually "concrete" nature of the language of sentiment, the new æsthetic underscored it to the point of hy-



2.2 Dorat, *Lettres de la chanoinesse de Lisbonne*. Eisen/Massard (§25: 1:33).

2.3 Opera. Dorat, *La déclamation théâtrale*. Eisen/De Ghendt (§21).

perbole, transforming such delicately noted gestures as “eyes turned aside, or the nonchalance of a hand” into grandiose and overstated postures.

It is thus not possible to distinguish completely between the two media nor between the predilections of particular artists and communal taste. Eisen’s frontispiece for Dorat’s *Lettres d’une chanoinesse de Lisbonne*, a verse adaptation of the celebrated seventeenth-century *Lettres portugaises* (by Gabriel de Guilleragues, 1669), already testifies to the cultivation of pathetic gesture (although there is still a substantial degree of allegory mixed in), which theatrical *drame* as a whole tries to avoid (figure 2.2). It seems to correspond to the following passage written just after the heroine has read her lover’s letter of farewell:

Cher et fatal objet de mes peines profondes,
 Mes soupirs jusqu’à vous égarés sur les ondes,
 Ne m’en rapportent rien qu’un solitaire effroi,
 Et des garants trop sûrs que tout finit pour moi.
 Suis-je assez confondue? assez infortunée?
 Il ne me manquait plus que d’être abandonnée.
 (§25: 67)

[Dear, fatal object of my deepest hurt, my sighs wandering over the waves unto you bring me back but a lonely fear, and the too certain evidence that all is finished for me. Am I enough confounded? unhappy enough? The only pain left for me was to be abandoned.]

The departing ship visible through the window is a literal, though temporally contrived, aspect of his departure; the bed from which she appears to have just arisen, like the tattered garlands strewn about the floor, allude back to the virtue she earlier willingly sacrificed to him; Cupid, finally, still hiding under the covers though his sorry flame has fallen to the ground, is wholly symbolic. The overall theatrical character of the illustration can be seen by comparing it to the personification of Opera in *La déclamation théâtrale*, also by Dorat (figure 2.3), which evokes magnificent costuming and grand stage effects; but the pose, scattered flowers, and overall composition are much the same.

In the theater this new sense of dynamic movement was consummately embodied in plays by Diderot and those by playwrights he in part inspired: Michel Jean Sedaine, Louis Sébastien Mercier, Baculard d'Arnaud, Pierre Caron de Beaumarchais—plays soon styled *dramas* that would shortly lead to the notion of melodrama. In prose narrative, on the other hand, the same potential for an æsthetics of tableaux could be realized by use of the historical anecdote⁴ (gripping ones like the story of Inkle and Yariko were illustrated many times, as well as adapted into other genres) and other morally overcharged plots like those of Marmontel's *Contes moraux* (although Gravelot's celebrated illustrations for these are in fact rather subdued as dramatic gesture goes).⁵ These genres, at least where Diderot's own art is concerned, turned out to be in some ways more fertile avenues of dramatic exploration than theater, allowing elbow room both for intensity of visual composition and for simultaneous elaboration of a corresponding theory. Diderot's *Les deux amis de Bourbonne*, one of the best examples, was adjoined by Gessner to a 1776 edition of his own work and also illustrated by Gessner himself with a plate (figure 2.4) alluding to the following passage, in which Felix brings home the body of the coal merchant (*charbonnier*) for whose death he feels responsible:

Il s'arrête à la porte, il étend le cadavre à ses pieds, et s'assied le dos appuyé contre un arbre et le visage tourné vers l'entrée de la cabane. Voilà le spectacle qui attendait la charbonnière au sortir de sa baraque.

Elle s'éveille, elle ne trouve point son mari à côté d'elle; elle cherche des yeux Félix, point de Félix. Elle se lève, elle sort, elle voit, elle crie, elle tombe à la renverse. Ses enfants accourent, ils voient, ils crient; ils

se roulent sur leur père, ils se roulent sur leur mère. La charbonnière, rappelée à elle-même par le tumulte et les cris de ses enfants, s'arrache les cheveux, se déchire les joues. Félix immobile au pied de son arbre, les yeux fermés, la tête renversée en arrière, leur disait d'une voix éteinte: "Tuez-moi."⁶

[He stopped at the door, spread the cadaver at his feet, and sat down with his back propped against a tree and his face turned toward the entrance to the cabin. This is the sight that awaited the coal-man's wife as she left her hovel.

She awakened, failed to find her husband beside her; she looked about for Felix: no Felix. She got up, went outside, saw, cried and fell over backwards. Her children came running, they too saw and cried; they fell prostrate on their father, on their mother. The coal-man's wife, brought to her senses by the tumult and her children's cries, pulled her hair, tore her cheeks. Felix, motionless at the foot of the tree, his eyes closed, his head thrown back, said to them in a whispered voice: "Kill me."]

2.4 Diderot, *Les deux amis de Bourbonne*. Gessner/Anon. (§33: 24).



Diderot has conceived and fixed the scene theatrically, and Gessner has done his best to respond in kind with carefully poised gestures and attitudes expressing grief and consternation; Felix seems to be looking heavenward instead of rehearsing death as in the text. If Moreau did not actually precede Gessner, he then imitated his basic structure in his own illustration (figure 2.5), antedating by a scant few moments the precise moment of action represented in order to transfer the more dramatically powerful gesture to the widow; in this rendition, we have opposite a rather laconic Felix a pyramid of despair over the fallen father.⁷ He also added a completely unrelated illustration, one more closely allied to traditional ones depicting duels.⁸

This tendency to follow the lead of Diderot's dramatic program can yield an apparent form of quintessentially tranquil domesticity, albeit one infused with an underlying tension, or lead rather to celebration of high domestic drama as in d'Arnaud's *Germueil*: here the hero, corrupted and

2.5 Diderot, *Les deux amis de Bourbonne*.
Moreau/Simonet (§35:
4:215).



2.6 d'Arnaud, *Germeuil*.
Marillier/Halbou (§3:
4:365).



ruined by his false Parisian friends, arrives just in time to seize from the hand of his long-suffering wife Adélaïde the poisoned cup with which she intends to end both her woes and his (figure 2.6). The presence of their children suggests the burdens she has had to bear alone, and Diderot would certainly have appreciated, along with such a domestic touch as the uncomprehending dog playing with a stick, the pathos of the baby in a walker reaching up toward her father.

In this category the work of Prévost is forcefully revived by Marillier in the 1783 edition of his *Oeuvres choisies*. Here the repertory of favored gestures and meanings is, as for the theatrical *drame* (and perhaps, though less schematically, for any affective theatrical gesture), quickly compiled: for example, grief, with head bowed and hands mopping tears from the eyes (figure 2.7), and extreme tension (often accompanied by fainting), where the visual impact is heightened by arms raised in various emphatic directions (figure 2.8). There is, to be sure, no question of separating the

subject into wholly discrete literary and artistic domains, but it must as always be recognized that the text alone does not and cannot determine either scene or treatment.

Certainly there are, and the passages corresponding to these two illustrations typify, intense dramas in Prévost. Indeed, the text is more replete with them than a couple of examples standing alone can begin to convey. Both of these are from the *Mémoires d'un homme de qualité*. In the first, Renoncour's valet Scoti, who believed his master dead, seems to be the center of attention at the moment of their tender reunion. It takes place in a thoroughly morbid context: Renoncour has lived in a sealed, crepe-draped mourning room (which he himself calls "cette espèce de tombeau" [a sort of tomb]) for a year, with the heart of his wife Selima enshrined in the urn on the table before him, her portrait on the wall, and her clothing draped about the room (book 5). And while the legend in the second illustration ("Ma nièce était tombée dans un profond évanouissement" [My niece had fallen into a deep faint]) puts the emphasis on Renoncour's niece Nadine,

2.7 "The faithful valet upon entering threw himself at my feet; he drenched them with his tears." Prévost, *Mémoires d'un homme de qualité*. Marillier/de Longueil (§66: 1:282). 2.8 "My niece had fallen into a deep faint." Prévost, *Mémoires d'un homme de qualité*. Marillier/Delvaux (§66: 3, frontispiece).



it is equally important to its meaning that Milady R—— has been stabbed with a sword and M. de B—— had his brain splattered on the floor by the marquis's pistol (book 13).⁹ The gun is itself a harbinger of specifically domestic forms of tragedy, for it has no place at all in traditional tragedy, where armed aggression is reserved to the sword. Marillier slants the entire human component of the composition to the left, creating another pyramid of grief set off by the exclamatory gesture of the person entering. His images are in both cases compatible with the text and emphasize the spectacular—not by trying to duplicate all the lugubrious details piled up in Prévost's text, but through stylized form and gesture. Darkness encompassing each scene is signified by the bright whiteness of the chandelier's aura. Marillier also respects a theatrical sense of decorum in ambiguously hiding from view the top of M. de B——'s shattered head, as if he were merely wounded and somehow still able to prop himself up.

Eminently reminiscent of the style and tenor of Greuze, such a moralistic subject was in fact illustrated by him in one of his rare book illustrations for Françoise Albine Benoist's *Sophronie* in 1769 (figure 2.9). *Sophronie*, a widow, wants to encourage Valzan to make advances to her, failing to realize that it is really her daughter Adèle he desires; but just as he tries confusedly and desperately to comfort her, Adèle enters, provoking a dramatic misunderstanding to which he can put an end only by declaring his true sentiments to *Sophronie*. The convergent leanings of the three characters are again typical of this type of illustration, as is the long, straight sweep of Valzan's arms which beckon to bring the two women together. Greuze was of course given to touching evocations of domestic authenticity, which brought cries of admiration from Diderot. Although this is far from his frequently rustic setting, he includes signs of daily activity in the balls of yarn and embroidery loom at the lower left. The curtain, emphasizing the room's height, counterbalances *Sophronie*'s long dress and adds grandeur to the scene.

Marillier, along with others, designed quite a number of similar tableaux to illustrate the various works of Baculard d'Arnaud, an artistic collaboration or at least combination that undoubtedly contributed to the overall ascendancy of the new style. As Robert Dawson remarks of d'Arnaud, "characters and events in his works, particularly from 1764 on, move in series of tableaux, a technique directly related to the stage of the time, dominated as it came to be by the overstated, pathetic acting of Le Kain and Mlle Clairon" (1976: 1:425). Among these tableaux are numerous death scenes typical of a well-known late-century taste feeding in part on a renewal of elegiac literature, particularly English and German. Their char-



2.9 "Ah! Madame, you are looking at her."
Mme Benoît, *Sophonie*.
Greuze/Moreau (§6).

acters, unlike tragic heroes, typically die in bed at home, but the dramatic staging surrounding them is intense. In d'Arnaud's *Pauline et Suzette*, the scene is, to begin with, theatrically composed:

Cependant on approchait de l'humble grabat où était couchée la pauvre Philippine. Suzette, à ses côtés, fondait en larmes, ainsi que Jacques qui partageait sa douleur; le curé soutenait la tête de la mourante, et aux pieds du lit s'était établi un rabellion qui semblait n'attendre que le moment d'écrire; une foule de spectateurs les entourait. (§3: 4:194–95)

[Meanwhile they approached the humble pallet where the poor Philippine was lying. Suzette, at her side, had broken into tears, as had Jacques, who shared her grief; the priest held up the dying woman's head, and at the foot of the bed was installed a notary, who seemed only to await the moment to begin writing. A crowd of spectators surrounded them.]

This descriptive composition is then balanced in the text by a dramatic one, the exact moment represented by Marillier, when the dying woman has just revealed that she had substituted her baby daughter Suzette for the real Pauline de Monticourt (figure 2.10):



2. 10 d'Arnaud, *Pauline et Suzette*. Marillier/de Launay (§3: 4:169). 2. 11 Voltaire, *L'ingénu*, chap. 20. Monnet/Vidal (§89: 2:316).

Jamais coup de tonnerre n'a été plus foudroyant. Mlle de Monticourt tombe comme anéantie près du lit, en poussant un cri effroyable: —Je suis Suzette! ce sont les seuls mots qu'elle puisse proférer. Suzette, de son côté, se précipite vers M. et Mme de Monticourt qui lui ouvraient leurs bras, et s'écrie: Quoi! voilà mon père et ma mère! Blinsey frappé de la même surprise recule quelques pas en arrière. Toute l'assemblée, par divers signes, exprime son étonnement. (§3: 194–96)¹⁰

[Never was a thunderclap more stupefying. Mlle de Monticourt fell as if stricken beside the bed, letting out an awful cry: —I am Suzette! These were the only words she could utter. Suzette, for her part, rushed toward the Monticourts, who opened their arms to her and cried out: So this is my father and mother! Blinsey, taken equally by surprise, took several steps backward. The whole assembly by various signs expressed its astonishment.]

Far from being an isolated dramatization, this scene is the pivotal one for the rest of the story, since it has compromised the love relationships centering on the two girls. The *reconnaissance*, a classical comic device, has been

domesticated and thereby recuperated for melodrama. The pathos of Mlle de Monticourt's position is heightened by turning her in all her pyramidal elegance toward the viewer of the plate, while all the other characters direct their attention elsewhere, either toward the old woman in bed or toward the reunited family group at the right.

Death asserts an increasingly visible presence in literature and its images. Tombs, which real society puts out of its way on terrains circumvented by daily life, now begin to crop up in all sorts of fictive contexts. There are, for instance, two plates for the scene in Ariosto's canto 36 where, as Marfisa and Rogero duel, Atlas proclaims to them from out of his tomb that they are in fact brother and sister.¹¹ But more often it is grief that is to be communicated. Charles Monnet underscores the moral lesson of the death of Mlle de St.-Yves in Voltaire's *L'ingénu* by depicting its cause, St-Pouange (accompanied by "l'amie de Versailles"), in contrition before her bier (figure 2.11):

Le bon Gordon était là, les yeux remplis de larmes. Il interrompt ses tristes prières pour apprendre à l'homme de cour toute cette horrible catastrophe. Il lui parle avec cet empire que donnent la douleur et la vertu. St. Pouange n'était point né méchant; . . . il écoutait Gordon, les yeux baissés, et il en essayait quelques pleurs qu'il était étonné de répandre: il connut le repentir. (chapter 20)

[The good Gordon was there, his eyes filled with tears. He interrupted his sad prayers to inform the courtier of this horrible catastrophe. He spoke with the serenity of grief and virtue. St. Pouange was not born wicked; . . . he listened to Gordon with head bowed, and he wiped some tears that he was surprised to shed: he knew repentance.]

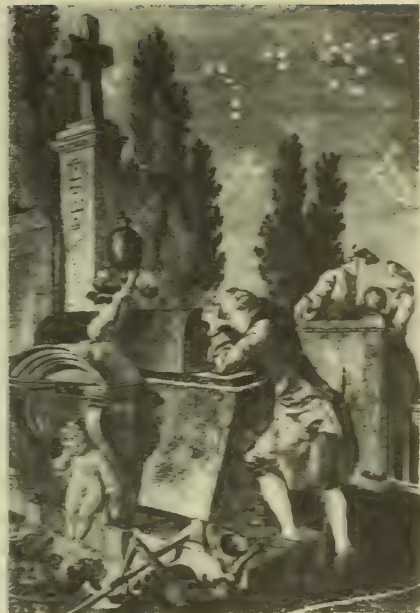
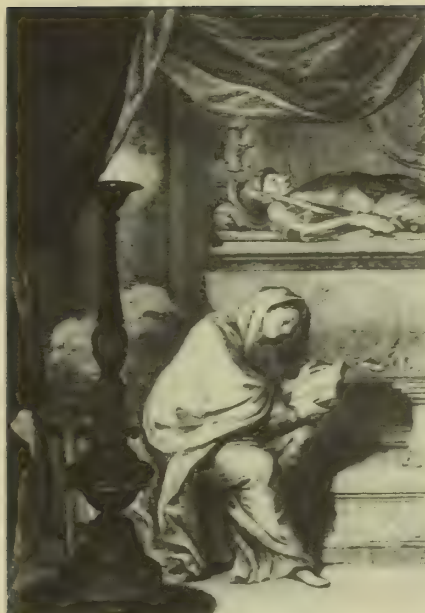
The stiff and parallel gestures of the characters hardly dominate over the imposing, austere presence of the bier crowned with powerful, lugubrious candles; at least an attempt is made here to represent violent emotion (or consternation) in the female companion's face. For Gessner's widely published biblical tale *La mort d'Abel*, Moreau depicts Thirza, Abel's wife, prostrate on his earthen grave, her body rising slightly toward the right echoing the lie of the land, as Cain, who "gémissait et levait les bras au ciel" [wailed and lifted his arms toward heaven], looks on (figure 2.12). Such a motif is often extended into morbid contemplation, as was already evident from Prévost's *Mémoires d'un homme de qualité*. That is part of the implication of the Giovanni Battista Cipriani plate in which Fleur-de-Lys mourns Brandimart in canto 43 of Ariosto's *Roland furieux* (figure 2.13). After having overseen the construction of his tomb, "She resolved in her

- 2.12 Gessner, *La mort d'Abel*. Moreau/De Ghendt (§35: 3:224).
 2.13 Ariosto, *Roland furieux*, canto 43. Cipriani/Bartholozzi (§2: 4:286).
 2.14 d'Arnaud, *Liebmán*. Anon. (§3: 3:342).



heart never to part thence until her soul was breathed from her body, and she had a cell made in the sepulchre, and there she shut herself up and passed her life. . . . She remained in the sepulchre, and there, worn out by penance, praying day and night, she did not last a long time before the threads of her life were broken by Fate" (Ariosto, trans. Gilbert, 2: 771). Thus the presence of the tomb implies also the desire to die, particularly in a love context (signaled here by the Cupid-like statue in the alcove behind the tomb) such as this and *L'Ingénu*. Dramatic lighting in the dark room is once more featured, although there is no grandiosity of gesture here. Fleur-de-Lys resembles a Da Vinci or Raphael Madonna, martyr of love and devotion; the book she holds is doubtless a devotional one or a missal, an allusion to the "offices et messes" she continually had said for Brandimart.

The subject of death can be simply contemplative, as is signified by the legend borne by an illustration for Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*: "O mort, souveraine propriétaire de tous les êtres, il t'appartient d'effacer les empires sous tes pas et d'éteindre les astres" [Death! great proprietor of all! 'tis thine / To tread out empire, and to quench the stars!].¹² In pictures, bones are the conventional reminder of this venerable memento mori tradition. In this period they are, however, the exception; though there are



significant instances of morbid fascination, they are usually coupled with romantic despair, and often, too, with a predisposition to melancholy. This is notably the case in the transparently named *Liehman* by Baculard d'Arnaud, whose hero is first encountered by the narrator in a cemetery weeping on Amélie's tomb. In the anonymous engraving the tomb is decorated with Amours and, though emblematic shovels and bones lie about, they are certainly not hers (figure 2.14).¹³

Suicide also becomes a literary theme, beginning with Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni's *Histoire du marquis de Cressy* (1758) and accelerating rapidly in the wake of Goethe's *Werther* (1774). Eisen's depiction of *Tragédie* shows her holding up a dagger that is pointed at herself.¹⁴ At the end of Louvet de Couvray's *Les amours du chevalier de Faublas* Mme de Lignolle flies across town in the rain exclaiming, "j'ai besoin d'eau, je brûle!" [I am burning; I need water!], only to plunge into the Seine and die. What is interesting about the illustration (figure 2.15) is that it represents this precipitous demise not with the breathless pace of the narrative but as if it constituted a premeditated or at least willful suicide, poisoning her on the edge of the river above the words that were uttered not then, in the narrative, but as she left the house. Lightning, water, and the quai of the Seine were never more stylized. The dominant tone is that of a deliberate reverie, interpo-

lated in, though not clearly justified by, the text; it can be realized only by substituting, for affective reasons, a romantic stasis and introspection for the accelerating rhythm of Faublas's rendition.

Baculard d'Arnaud's work is in this context a lode of poetic inspiration to the artist. The heroine of *Euphémie* begins the play by lying in a coffin, and ends it (while pursuing the beloved Sinval, who has just left her forever) by falling into the arms of Mélanie and Cécile exclaiming, "Je n'ai plus qu'à mourir" [Death is all that remains] (figure 2.16); in between these two scenes are to be found even more lugubrious visions. The religious trappings coincide with the idea that one of the functions of a monastery, sometimes the principal one, is to encourage one to contemplate death. Gothic vaults seem to reduce the dramatic pyramid of characters to their earthly relative position and the tomb to open spontaneously beneath them. Memento mori figure even more heavily in *Le comte de Comminge ou les amants malheureux*. The first of two illustrations by Marillier (figure 2.17) represents the Chevalier d'Orsigni with the monk Euthime and brother Arsène (really Comminge) in a setting that tries to do rigorous justice to d'Arnaud's rather remarkable stage specifications:

2.15 "I am burning; I need water!" Louvet de Couvray, *Les amours du chevalier de Faublas*. Dutertre/Delvaux (§49: 4:301). 2.16 d'Arnaud, *Euphémie*. Restout/Augustin de Saint-Aubin (§4b).





2. 17 d'Arnaud, *Le comte de Comminge*. Marillier/Massard (§4a: 3).

La toile se lève, et laisse voir un souterrain vaste et profond, consacré aux sépultures des religieux de la Trappe; deux ailes du cloître, fort longues et à perte de vue, y viennent aboutir; on y descend par deux escaliers de pierres grossièrement taillées et d'une vingtaine de degrés. Il n'est éclairé que d'une lampe. Au fond s'élève une grande croix, telle qu'on en voit dans nos cimetières, au bas de laquelle est adossé un sépulcre peu élevé, et formé de pierres brutes; plusieurs têtes de morts amoncelées lient ce monument avec la croix; c'est le tombeau du célèbre abbé de Rancé, fondateur de la Trappe. Plus avant, du côté gauche, est une fosse qui paraît nouvellement creusée, sur les bords de laquelle sont une pioche, une pelle, etc. (§4a: 3)

[The curtain rises, and reveals a vast and deep catacomb devoted to the sepulchres of the Trappists. Two wings of the cloister, stretching as far

as one can see, come together in the middle; this place is reached via two stairways of roughly cut stone and twenty or so steps. It is lit only by a lamp. At the back is a large cross, like those in our cemeteries, at the foot of which is a low sepulchre made of crude stones; several skulls in a pile connect this monument with the cross: this is the tomb of the celebrated abbot de Rancé, founder of the Trappist order. Further to the front, on the left, is a pit that appears newly dug, on the edge of which are a pick, a shovel, etc.]

The grave described is the one Comminge has dug for himself, as each brother is required to do; Euthime says, as he is dying: “Soutenons ce spectacle, il apprend à mourir” [Let us bear this sight: it teaches us how to die] (§4a: 39). That exhortation furnishes the legend for the second illustration, which is quite similar. But by the time Euthime actually dies (which is what the plate represents, rather than the moment he pronounces these words), the love interest has been fully revealed: Euthime is recognized as Adélaïde in disguise—that is, the very woman for love of whom Comminge himself is wasting away.

That illustrations of Baculard d’Arnaud are not altogether exceptional is evident, however, from many other works exploiting the lugubrious. In Arnaud Berquin’s “Le pressentiment” [The Foreboding], Lise has a nightmare in which her *berger* Julien appears trailing a long veil; he leads her through fields, forests, and valleys, then through a cemetery to an old temple, where she mistakes the altar for the romantic goal of their mission:

Mais vers la nef Julien marche à pas lents.
Dans le milieu de l’enceinte déserte,
Elle le voit, près d’un tas d’ossements,
L’oeil attaché sur une tombe ouverte.

Il y descend, s’y couche, et sur le bord
Il se soulève, et dévoilant sa tête:
Lise, tu vois, ô Lise, je suis mort.
(§10: 53)

[Julien walked slowly toward the nave. In the midst of the empty court, she saw him near a pile of bones looking at an open tomb. He climbed down into it, lay down; then lifting himself back up on the edge, and uncovering his head, he said: Lise, you see, oh Lise, I am dead.]

This is the moment of the illustration (figure 2.18). The setting includes a hanging on the right wall decorated with death’s heads—hardly an explicit



2. 18 Berquin, "Le presentiment." Marillier/de Launay (§10: 53).

part of the dream as described in the text; but on the other hand, the visual representation of a dream is something that has no literal model in the real world. Julien, here already (or still) beshrouded, tells Lise how he has been killed and begs her to remain faithful to him; the poem concludes on this note of macabre premonition:

La tombe alors se referme à grand bruit.
Lise en sursaut se réveille, s'écrie.
Le jour naissait. Ce jour même elle apprit
Que son amant avait perdu la vie.¹⁵
(§10: 53)

[Then the tomb closed again with a clang. Lise awoke with a start and cried out. Day was breaking. That very day she learned that her lover had lost his life.]

Anne Claude Philippe de Tubières, comte de Caylus, writing in “Les épreuves de l’amour dans les quatre éléments” [Tests of love in the four elements], contrives to have *living* lovers meet unexpectedly in a grave—a kind of successful revenge of the foredoomed subplot in *Romeo and Juliet*. After she feigns pregnancy in order to get out of a convent, Eulalie is then sent to the gallows for apparent infanticide but from there is cut down just in time by Alexis. When he absents himself for a fortnight, she falls into a fatal lethargy, and he returns only in time to attend her burial. That night, he goes to her grave determined to rejoin her in death, lies down beside her, covers himself with dirt, then falls asleep (figure 2.19). It has to be said that this illustration will work only if the grave is shallow indeed; Eulalie almost appears to have been merely laid on top of the ground, like the bones surrounding her. The next day, in any case, the two slowly awaken together (“O ciel! ressuscitons-nous? Est-ce aujourd’hui le grand

2.19 “Oh heaven! are we resurrecting? Is this the great day?” Caylus, “Les étrennes de la Saint-Jean.” Marillier/Fessard (§15: 10:454).





2.20 "A young monk dies in Abelard's arms from the effects of a poison prepared for the other." Abailard, *Lettres d'Héloïse et d'Abailard*. Moreau/Simonet (§1: 1:67).
 2.21 Ariosto, *Roland furieux*, canto 37. Moreau/Moreau (§2: 4:57).

jour?" [Oh heaven! are we resurrecting? Is this the great day?]), and only little by little come to realize, as Alexis's clutching at her burial garments seems to suggest, that they have in fact not yet passed into the other world.

When it comes to death, however, the whole dramatic movement (paralleled in fiction by the *roman noir*) showed a predilection for its more violent forms. What is relatively new about the dramatic grandiloquence of this type of death scene is that it does not illustrate stage tragedies but works instead from a romance tradition, particularly but not exclusively late medieval or "gothic." Two examples by Moreau create entirely different kinds of tragic ambiance, the one solitary and spare, with the familiar contrast of artificial lighting: "Un jeune religieux expire entre les bras d'Abailard par l'effet d'un poison préparé pour ce dernier" [A young monk dies in Abelard's arms from the effects of a poison prepared for the other] (figure 2.20); and the other collective and monumental: it is the death of Ariosto's Drusilla, who poisons herself during the celebration of her marriage with Tanacre (at left) in order thereby to avenge her husband Olindre over his very tomb (figure 2.21). Here we have some elements we have already seen: the tomb draped in black; the arresting profile of the heroine flanked by characters echoing the calamity, all accented with magnificently eloquent hands; but also, at far left and right, expressions

of the passions that seem to be right out of Peter Paul Rubens or Charles Le Brun. Other forms of violence also abound. However popular the sentimental exploitation of the Abelard story, its pivotal scene was of course a particularly gruesome act of mutilation, which Eisen illustrates about as graphically as possible (figure 2.22) in a frontal view showing the razor about to do its work. Moreau partly imitated him later, achieving a different sort of dramatic intensity by a focal light source near the center of the operation, with the dreadful blade being brandished before the victim's eyes (figure 2.23).¹⁶ Again, there is a reminiscence of Le Brun's archetypes of the passions in the faces of Abelard and the man next to him; the forcefully rectilinear bed post lends additional relief to the carefully varied poses of the numerous participants.

Given this literary and artistic climate, it is not surprising to find a great number of illustrations prominently featuring a sword or dagger, sometimes one that is merely threatening but more often one that has just been used or is about to be. One might say, of course, that a stabbing even more than a duel inherently makes a good tableau, though there is not much place for stabbings on the tragic stage at the time. Even a crude, anonymous illustration of Prévost's scene where Cleveland is stabbed by Gelin

2.22 Colardeau, *Lettre amoureuse d'Héloïse à Abailard*. Eisen/Anon. (§16: 11, head-piece).





2.23 "Abelard's castration." Abailard, *Lettres d'Héloïse et d'Abailard*. Moreau/Langlois (§1: 1:33).

is, dramatically speaking, pretty striking (figure 2.24), especially with the victim pictured as if expiring head down on the left:

J'eus assez de bonheur pour écarter le premier coup: mais comme je me levais de ma chaise en m'efforçant de le saisir, il me fit tomber sur le lit de repos qui était à côté de moi, et me plongea deux fois son épée au travers du corps. Je demeurai étendu et sans force, en versant deux ruisseaux de sang. Le chanoine, qui n'avait pu être assez prompt pour arrêter mon assassin, se jeta sur lui au moment qu'il me portait un troisième coup, et lui saisit heureusement le poignet. (§67: 4:342–43)

[I was fortunate enough to turn aside the first blow; but as I was rising from my chair to try to grab him, he threw me back on the couch that was beside me and twice thrust his sword through me. I lay prostrate and helpless, spilling two rivers of blood. The canon, who had been unable to stop my assassin, leapt upon him as he gave me a third blow and fortunately got hold of his wrist.]

A significant formal interaction to note here: the narrator's *je* itself constitutes in the narration the assurance that he (the character lying on the bed) is not in fact dead; but since the narrator cannot visually be represented as a "je", the illustration in itself carries no such implicit guarantee. By 1783 we find a much more systematic development of the dramatic and artistic potential, as, for example, in another stabbing scene from Prévost's *Mémoires d'un homme de qualité* (figure 2.25). Renoncour himself calls the event a "spectacle," but he is referring to the aftermath:

Trois corps étendus dans des ruisseaux de sang, mon cher marquis entre mes bras, sans mouvement et sans connaissance, don Diego qui s'arrachait les cheveux près de sa fille, et qui perçait l'air de ses cris, ses trois fils qui tâchaient d'arrêter le sang de leur trop malheureuse soeur, et tous les autres spectateurs dans un trouble qui ne leur permettait pas même de penser à nous secourir. (§66: 2:61–62)

[Three bodies lying in rivers of blood; my dear marquis in my arms, motionless and unconscious; Don Diego, who was tearing his hair beside his daughter and rending the air with his cries; his three sons, who were trying to stanch their unhappy sister's blood; and all the other witnesses in a consternation such that they did not even think of trying to help us.]

Perhaps Marillier felt that "rivers of blood" could not be rendered effectively, or that this was too much holocaust to portray all at once; he chose for his illustration, in any event, the minute just preceding this passage, but one more rapid and decisive for his purposes:

Dans le même instant, donna de Pastrino, qui se douta bien que c'était le marquis de Rosemont, et qui vit entrer après lui son frère, les mains liées de plusieurs cordes, s'écria avec une fureur inexprimable: Quoi! je vois le meurtrier de mon fils, et qui veut l'être encore de mon frère! Tiens, ajouta cette barbare en enfonçant le poignard au milieu du sein de donna Diana, voilà pour toi, qui es son amante; et elle se leva ensuite pour se jeter sur le marquis.¹⁷

[At the same instant, Doña Pastrino, who was pretty sure it was the Marquis de Rosemont and saw her brother coming in after him with his hands tied with several cords, cried out with inexpressible fury: What! I see the murderer of my son, who now is trying to kill my brother! There! the barbarous woman added, burying the dagger in Doña Diana's breast, that's for you, his mistress; and she then got up and threw herself on the marquis.]



2.24 Prévost, *Le philosophe anglais*. Anon. (§67: 4:334). 2.25 "What! I see the murderer of my son, who now is trying to kill my brother!" Prévost, *Mémoires d'un homme de qualité*. Marillier/Halbou (§66: 2, frontispiece).

That is, the artist poises the dagger just before it falls on Diana, set off by the angle of all the swords and pikes in her direction, and in so doing charges with pathos Diana's futile entreaty of forgiveness or mercy. In contrast, the executioner in Louis d'Ussieux's *Jeanne Gray, anecdote anglaise* holds aloft the severed head of Guilford as his wife prepares to submit to the same fate (§83, unsigned), doubtless because, just as d'Ussieux's text is meant to evoke an historical drama (despite its inclusion in a volume entitled *Le Décameron français*), the artist imitates historical painting to a degree untypical of book illustrations.

Prisoners in chains also are not uncommon. For Marmontel's *Les Incas*, Moreau depicts Ataliba, a Peruvian "monarch," with his family who have fallen asleep "les yeux épuisés de larmes, et le coeur lassé de sanglots" [his tears exhausted, and his heart weary with sobs], as his executioners arrive (figure 2.26).¹⁸ The chains themselves are not imposing, though the pillar that secures him, standing for the massive and incontrovertible au-



2.26 "Ataliba's family . . . was asleep round about him." Marmon-
tel, *Les Incas*, chap. 53.
Moreau/Née (§55:
2:360).

thority of his captors, certainly is; the emphasis is on it, on the contrast of wakefulness and sleep, and on the various positions by which the family betray their insuperable weariness. The chains are a major focus, however, in Baculard d'Arnaud's *Varbeck*, where the Comtesse de Huntley is about to stab herself in despair at her husband's fate when Astley rushes in to save him (figure 2.27);¹⁹ at the same time, the symmetry of posture and gesture of the two men lends relief to the pivotal role of the heroine. One is reminded of the pathos commonly emphasized in renditions of the *caritas romana* theme, in which an aged prisoner is sustained by his daughter's milk; an Indian parallel of this legend was likewise included in *Les Incas* and illustrated by Moreau.²⁰

Dorat provides us an intriguing—if too willfully “classical” and self-serving—description of these fashions in the prefatory remarks to his verse adaptation of the *Lettres portugaises* mentioned earlier in this chapter:

Aujourd'hui si l'on veut procurer quelque plaisir, soit au lecteur, soit au spectateur, il faut leur donner des convulsions. Des effets, à quelque prix que ce soit des effets et point de nature. *C'était bon autrefois, pour me servir des expressions de Molière, dans le Médecin malgré lui; mais les Littérateurs modernes ont changé tout cela.* Le charbon de terre de Londres s'est joint aux brouillards de Paris. Il nous faut, comme chez nos voisins, des massacres, des viols, des têtes de morts, des ombres encapuchonnées de leurs linceuls, toute la charge enfin de *Drury Lane*, pour ranimer des âmes éteintes, et remuer des têtes qui sont plus vides encore, qu'elles ne sont mélancoliques; car nous avons la prétention d'être tristes, et nous ne sommes qu'ennuyés.²¹

[To bring any pleasure to either reader or viewer today, you have to give them convulsions. Effects, at any price, and no Nature. *That used to be all right, to use Molière's phrase in Le médecin malgré lui; but modern*



2.27 d'Arnaud, *Varbeck*.
Eisen/Née (§3: 1:130).

writers have changed all that. London's coal has combined with Paris fogs. We, like our neighbors, need massacres, rapes, skulls, shades hooded in shrouds, in short, the whole paraphernalia of *Drury Lane*, to put new life into extinct souls and stir brains even more empty than they are melancholy; for our pretense is that we are sad, and we are only bored.]

Dorat's own work, which he is implicitly justifying, is, of course, an attempt to purify and elevate what was to start with a notably spare text. Besides rejecting faddishness in the name of more austere values—a significant enough commentary relative to this period, which is still too often lumped together with classicism—he suggests that a nefarious English influence is fundamentally to blame.

At the extreme limit, domestic drama shades off into brutality, of which Nicolas-Edmé Restif de la Bretonne is, at least in relatively “high” literature, a notable champion. With the abjection of Ursule in *La paysanne pervertie*, for example, it is clear that prison means not necessarily chains (though they, too, play a role) but abuse in many forms; one typical illustration (figure 2.28) corresponds to this passage:

Ce n'était pas tout: le quatrième jour le porteur d'eau m'a fait signer, à force de coups, et presque mourante, la vente de mon bien, déjà hypothéqué pour la moitié de sa valeur. En voyant le notaire, quoiqu'après avoir consenti, j'ai voulu réclamer; l'infâme s'en est aperçu, et m'a foulée aux pieds. On est accouru à mes hurlements, car ma voix étouffée n'était plus autre chose. “Tu signeras!” criait le misérable porteur d'eau. J'étais couverte de sang et méconnaissable. On m'a lavée, et mise au lit. J'ai signé. Depuis ce moment, je n'ai plus été battue. Mais d'autres abominations m'attendaient. (§70: part 6, letter 127)

[That was not all: on the fourth day the water carrier made me sign, beaten and almost dead, for the sale of my property, already mortgaged for half its value. When I saw the notary, but only after agreeing to this, I wanted to renege; the scoundrel realized this and threw me down at his feet. My screams—for my suffocated voice was no more than this—brought others running. “You will sign!” cried the miserable water carrier. I was covered with blood and unrecognizable. They washed me and put me to bed. I signed. From this time on I was never beaten. But other abominations awaited me.]

Besides the act of aggression, contrasted to the passive composure of the notary and other observers, what is most striking here is the variety of cos-



2.28 Restif de la Bretonne, *La paysanne pervertie*. Binet/Anon. (§70: 3:318).

tume, signifying, as it does, the social gamut represented, from exotic to banal, sword to scum. The relationship to Sade of such a literary and illustrative tendency needs hardly be stressed. Unlike most other practitioners of similar topoi, Restif argues that they really constitute a significant part of everyday life; they are scarcely more subdued in a work with an architypal but domestic name like *Un ménage parisien* [A Parisian household]. Despite the fact that such scenes are supposed to be made of quotidian materials, I think it can be safely said that in most cases they are barely imaginable. Maurice Lévy has amply documented this kind of illustration in the *roman noir*, and I can only refer to the many illustrations he gives in his anthology (Lévy 1973), as well as to his overall characterization of the situations they depict:

Thus all the elements join together to drive the heroine to despair: skies strewn with storms and migrating birds, inaccessible mountains and dizzying precipices, water everywhere threatening, an enemy to beat back and reclaim victims from; fire too makes human love fragile

and so ephemeral. . . . Above all, in becoming “gothic” the novel is un-urbanized and places its characters within a nature that is bristling with medieval structures, gothic buildings which symbolize the carceral universe phantasmagorized by this late-eighteenth century. (Lévy 1980: 159)

The many plates he reproduces are eloquent demonstrations of the constant reproduction of a continual if varied literary and visual model. Few of them are the work of skilled artists, and few are signed, but such imitation by artists at all levels is often good evidence of the power of a stereotype.

One particular type of symbol that seems notable (though not predominant) in these contexts because of its mythic, sempiternal quality is the evil power suggested by creatures associated with witchcraft, bats and serpents in particular. Over and over again in his metaphorical frontispieces to *La paysanne pervertie* Louis Binet uses devilish, serpentine, and other slimy and

2.29 Ariosto, *Roland furieux*, canto 42.
Anon./Ponce (§2).





2.30 Berquin, "The deadly revenge of jealousy." Marillier/de Launay (§10: 33).

ghoulish creatures to suggest that the reader should cringe at the spectacle of Parisian perversion.²² When Renaud is saved from Jealousy by Disdain in canto 42 of Ariosto's *Roland furieux* (figure 2.29), we are in the realm of pure allegory (even if it is in part mock allegory), as the Medusa-like figure and the flaming club of the protector emphasize.²³ But something interesting happens when what seems a similar type of serpent appears in the illustration for Arnaud Berquin's "La funeste vengeance de la jalousie" [The deadly revenge of jealousy] (figure 2.30). The orphan Isabelle has been thrown by her jealous stepmother into a dark prison tower marked by "une vapeur infecte et ténébreuse" [a dark and infectious vapor] whence issue "d'horribles sifflements" [horrible hissings]: the snake is literal this time, a fact that exceeds in horror even the ugly woman's intentions. And yet it is not quite literal either when juxtaposed with the verse:

Epouvantée alors elle accourt; on s'empresse,
Le cachot funeste est ouvert;
On y plonge un flambeau: Vois, féroce tigresse,
Vois quel spectacle t'est ouvert.

C'est ta nièce; elle expire. Une couleuvre énorme,
Les yeux d'un noir venin gonflés,
Autour de ce beau corps roule son corps difforme,
L'étouffe en ses noeuds redoublés.
Dans l'accès des fureurs, dont la soif la tourmente,
Elle lui déchire le flanc,
Et dans son coeur ouvert plongeant sa gueule ardente,
S'abreuve à longs traits de son sang.

(§10: 40)

[Appalled, she hurried forth; they crowded about, and the deadly dungeon was opened; a torch was lowered inside: Look now, fierce tigress, what a spectacle is yours. That is your niece, and she is dying. An enormous adder, its eyes swollen by a black venom, entwined its misshapen body around hers and suffocated her in its many knots. Tortured by thirst, in a burst of fury it tore her apart, and plunging its burning mouth into her open heart, it drank her blood in long draughts.]

The multiplication of serpents in the illustration, and their transformation into vampires in the text, makes of them visual metaphors; moreover, Isabelle's persecutor, in panic, believing she, too, is being bitten by serpents, serves now as a parable of remorse.

There is of course a relationship between exploitative horror and the sublime, even if the sublime is in ways a distinct æsthetic category quite removed from both stage setting and gothic novel. Many historical and religious paintings can be assimilated to the sublime, and poetry like painting often tried to extrapolate from heroic commonplaces new and yet grander images. Thus Gessner's *Tableau du déluge*, illustrated by Moreau, which manages to transport the pastoral topos to the top of the peak where the last remaining humans seek refuge as the floodwaters rise (figure 2.31). Semin and Sémire, in each other's arms, sing a hymn to God's justice, concluding with the "Ensevelissez-nous" of the legend, which continues in the text: "voilà qu'elle vient, la mort; elle s'avance sur cette vague noire. . . . Ils parlaient ainsi; et, se tenant embrassés, ils furent entraînés par les flots" [Bury me; death is upon me; it is coming with this black wave. . . . Thus they spoke; and embracing each other, they were carried off by the



2.31 "Bury us, ye waves! . . . there! ah, kiss me, my beloved." Gessner, *Tableau du déluge*. Moreau/Girardet (§36: 2:14).

waters].²⁴ As many superlatives as possible cascade together to elevate both poetic and visual expression to an apocalyptic consummation. Yet visually this representation is austere and stylized: the rectilinear rain and lightning above, the swirling sea, garments, and rock below, and the overstated but statuesque frozenness of the heroes' gestures. The floating bodies do not respond to this tempestuousness, and the female torso in the middle foreground even injects a disconcerting eroticism amidst all this sublimity.

Overtly, the grandiloquence we have been talking about here has little erotic content except to the extent that such images as daggers or mountains are read in terms of their rather obvious Freudian stereotypes. There are, however, both historical and thematic reasons for bringing them into dialogue with even some of the erotic themes to appear later in this book. Dramatic illustration is, like dramatic fiction, a controlled, domesticated means of procuring for the reader/viewer the pleasures of violence. It is not much interested in gore, but it at once expresses and contains the explosive forces of human emotion and their destructive potential; and these, of course, are not lacking in sexual energies. That discovery we owe in large

measure to Donatien Alphonse François de Sade, in whose work the latent violence of drama is most extravagantly and willfully unleashed. In Sade the sublime is stripped of its sentimental niceties and exposed for the raw and terrible passion that exults in torture of a particularly and specifically sexual nature. His work—itself abundantly illustrated during the censure-free 1790s—represents in other words a complete conflation of “domestic” passion and erotic aggression. Yet the argument for this assimilation of themes does not depend entirely upon the historical fact of Sade’s own work, for it is quite evident in the writings and illustrations of earlier or less famous figures such as Baculard d’Arnaud or Restif de la Bretonne.

Essentially these currents are inseparable. Any form of sexual expression that is ostensibly sublimated may be nonetheless, as Michel Foucault has shown (1976), a discourse of obsession. It should be understood, then, that the schematic distinction between the drama just discussed and the erotic themes in my final chapters is merely heuristic: these discrete thematic strains are in psychological reality, as in the narrative contexts under study, closely intertwined. On its most fundamental level this is a psychological assumption, but it is also a practical reality to the degree that every dramatic illustration could lend itself in some measure to decipherment as representation or projection of diegetic desire.

3 *The Intervisual Paradigm*

Engravings can be approached and read in a number of lights, each with potentially valid heuristic claims. The most traditional corpus for comparative study consists of the diverse works of one artist; less frequently, though more recently, we have seen studies of the sequence of illustrations for a given text or of succeeding sets of illustrations for the same text. This book offers instead the partial codification of a less standard kind of paradigm, at the figural and intertextual level,¹ defined by thematic resemblances between illustrations irrespective of how similar or dissimilar their related literary texts may purport to be. It is an empirical identification of a few recognizable instances, not an exhaustive taxonomy. Underdetermined from the standpoint of textually generated specificity, the illustration is nonetheless constrained by the representational language available to an artist at a given time, or even *overdetermined* by the authority of certain obsessional traditions. The overall cultural inventory is such that a large number of engravings of the period have many things in common, and this phenomenon can be demonstrated by even a limited range of specific images. By juxtaposing images that ostensibly relate to a variety of apparently discrete literary contexts, one is able to perceive also their own level of continuity, and this in turn renews awareness of certain literary fixations. Three clusters serve in this chapter as examples of the ways in which illustrations of quite separate works share the same patterns of iconic connotations.

The ones invoked here are largely sexual, if only for the reason noted by Alain Guillermin: that, within the range of symbolic languages, sexual difference stands out as one that between the eighteenth century and ours has lost relatively little of its currency:

Nous ne comprenons plus guère que ceux qui reposent sur une logique dont nous pouvons encore suivre le cheminement. C'est le cas des différentes colorations des deux sexes: cette opposition et toutes les connotations qu'elle enferme proviennent d'une convention idéologique toujours active. (1980: 178)

[About the only ones we can still understand are those based on a logic we can still follow. Such is the case for the different sexual colorations: the opposition of the sexes and all the connotations it carries arise from an ideological convention which is still active.]

This observation about characteristic oppositions by gender is equally true or nearly so of eroticism in general. It is of course a commonplace that sexuality was one of the master myths of the eighteenth century, and this may be, although in scrupulous comparison with other periods the assumption might be difficult to prove. Certainly sexual imagery plays a large role in its artistic life, but again the Enlightenment may be more similar than is usually recognized to any other period in that regard. What tends to be considered a sort of obsession on its part—or on the part of the critic, or both—is also, perhaps, something that imposes its ongoing presence simply by virtue of being perdurably clear and decipherable.

One useful approach, described by Alain-Marie Bassy, is to track down sexual connotation in particular through what he calls “trans-iconicité” or “inter-iconicité”:

A travers les innombrables planches gravées d'après Baudoin, Borel, Debucourt ou Fragonard, le jeu des citations réciproques, l'itération des thèmes signalent la présence et la permanence d'un code élaboré de représentation. La confrontation de ces planches “galantes” avec les planches “libres,” non signées, moins allusives et plus audacieuses produites dans le même temps, permet d'apprécier l'étendue et la diversité de ce lexique symbolique. Certains objets, certains êtres réapparaissent constamment à titre de métonymies: animal domestique, jeune serviteur, carafe à col étroit, verre d'eau débordant, éponge, ou chandelle. Le jeu érotique de l'image commence par la résolution de la métonymie. Ce lexique n'est toutefois, à la différence de l'emblématique médiévale, ni établi dans un dictionnaire, ni définitivement fixé. Il ne se révèle qu'au travers du système des images. Le plaisir ne s'acquiert que par la fréquentation assidue de l'ensemble d'une production. La jouissance qu'éprouve le “voyeur” à la lecture de l'image galante naît d'abord de la maîtrise du code, qui lui permet d'enfreindre, en le tournant, l'interdit moral.² (1984: 161)

[Throughout the innumerable plates engraved after Baudoin, Borel, Debucourt, or Fragonard, the play of reciprocal quotations and the iteration of themes signals the presence and the permanence of an elaborate code of representation. Comparison of these “gallant” plates with “risqué” plates, unsigned, less allusive and more daring, produced at the same time, gives an idea of the extent and diversity of this symbolic lexicon. Certain objects, certain beings reappear constantly in a metonymic role: domestic animals, young servants, a narrow-necked carafe, an overflowing glass of water, a sponge or candle. The erotic play of the image begins with resolution of the metonymy. This lexicon is nonetheless, unlike medieval emblematics, neither set down in a dictionary, nor definitively fixed. It can be perceived only through the system of images. The pleasure can be acquired only through patient observation of an entire production. The delight experienced by the “voyeur” of a gallant image derives first from mastery of the code, which enables him to violate the moral injunction via a bypass.]

The suggested comparison of “planches libres” or indecent plates with decent ones is explored in Chapter 8; here, my concern is with aspects of the code—including some of the “metonyms” Bassy mentions—that permeate all kinds of subjects, even those that are not ostensibly sexual. That lexicon is indeed so vast that no exhaustive repertory can yet be envisioned. The pragmatic ease of identifying this particular category of preoccupations and redundancies makes it a suitable domain in which to begin developing tools of recognition that can later be extended to more elusive sorts of content.

Spilt Milk

There are innumerable ways in which representation can shade off into allegory. Even if it seems that a natural image can be symbolically neutral—a tree is just a tree, and water, water—in art that simple equivalence is problematical, particularly when it comes to water. A spring has many mythological, and consequently allegorical, connotations, as do rivers and lakes. All are frequently associated with ablutions—a theme to which I return below—and, via that connection, with the sensual attraction of nudity; if the anonymous work called *Vénus à la coquille* in the Louvre³ is really Venus, then the fact that an overturned vase accompanies her distinguishes its particular meaning from that of overflowing vases that elsewhere merely symbolize springs or rivers. But the association of flowing or falling water with sensuous motifs is too widespread for any doubt to

persist about its extended connotations: see, for example, the tailpiece to Dorat's fourth *Baiser* (figure 3.1), which accompanies a fanciful description of a Roman cult to *le baiser* (with the fundamental lexical ambiguity which that word itself implies), although it does not otherwise specifically echo any representation in the poem.

In principle, the moral of La Fontaine's "La laitière et le pot au lait" alludes to disappointed expectations more than it does to lost innocence; such a meaning is consistent with the author's own adaptation of it in the maxim "Proprement, toute notre vie / Est . . . la fable du Pot au lait" [In truth, our entire life is . . . the fable of the broken pitcher].⁴ Jean Baptiste Oudry's rendition of the fable in the 1755 edition (engraved by Riland) maintains this straightforwardness. But the eighteenth century is full of milkmaids—many perhaps inspired by La Fontaine⁵—who suggest a Greuze-like tension between sweet innocence and sexual availability. Fragonard's painting *Perrette et le pot au lait*⁶ brings in three elements suggesting this: two male onlookers, the way Perrette's skirts and slips fly up to bare her thighs, and the vapor emanating from the milk can, which alludes emblematically to her evanescent fantasies but also, possibly, to the wistful distractions of desire. The milk at least is a fairly authentic holdover from the implied narrative. This is much less true of *La conviction*, a print by Jean Frédéric Schall (figure 3.2), where the sexual nature of the subject becomes unambiguous. It is a typical rustic tryst motif where, as an added ironic turn, the lover has fled, inopportunely leaving behind his telltale hat:

3.1 Dorat, *Les baisers*.
Eisen/Lingée (§20: 75).





3.2 *The conviction*, print.
Schall/Marchand.

Ah! tu m'en imposais! J'étais de bonne foi...
Regarde ce chapeau! Pleure, et corrige-toi.

[Ah, you were deceiving me! And I was in good faith... Look at this
hat! Weep, and mend your ways.]

There is nothing particularly logical, diegetically, about the overturned can of milk in the girl's room; its only rationale is now symbolic.⁷

The many *cruches cassées* to be found in eighteenth-century art usually are based on this slight metonymic connection between symbol and subject; that is, although there may be some minimal anecdotal reason for the vessel's presence, it at the same time takes on sexual connotations. This is the case of a Greuze print entitled *La fille confuse* (engr. Pierre Charles and François Robert Ingouf)⁸ in which, as the kitchen maid apparently listens to a proposition being relayed to her through the window, a neglected pot is boiling over. One of the most famous examples of this motif is Greuze's *La cruche cassée* at the Louvre (engraved by Jean Massard in 1773),⁹ where the girl's dishevelment, the cloak on the ground, and the fountain all

further attest to these sexual and moral implications. Indeed, the 1762 edition of the *Contes* of La Fontaine includes a poem attributed to Autereau that begins much like "La laitière et le pot au lait" only to end in a more explicit, although humorously transposed, encounter:

Un de ces jours dame Germaine,
Pour certain besoin qu'elle avait,
Envoya Jeanne à la fontaine:
Elle y courut; cela pressait.
Mais en courant, la pauvre créature
Eut une fâcheuse aventure.
Un malheureux caillou, qu'elle n'aperçut pas,
Vint se rencontrer sous ses pas.
A ce caillou Jeanne trébuche,
Tombe enfin, et casse sa cruche;
Mieux eût valu cent fois s'être cassé le cou.
Casser une cruche si belle?
Que faire? Que deviendra-t-elle?
Pour en avoir une autre, elle n'a pas un sou.
Quel bruit va faire sa maîtresse
De sa nature très diablesse?
Comment éviter son courroux?
Quel emportement? Que de coups!
Oserai-je jamais me r'offrir à sa vue?
Non, non, dit-elle: enfin il faut que je me tue.
Tuons-nous. Par bonheur, un voisin près de là,
Accourut, entendant cela;
Et pour consoler l'affligée,
Lui chercha les raisons les meilleures qu'il put;
Mais pour bon orateur qu'il fût,
Elle n'en fut point soulagée;
Et la belle toujours s'arrachant les cheveux,
Faisait couler deux ruisseaux de ses yeux,
Enfin voulait mourir; la chose était conclue.
Hé bien, veux-tu que je te tue,
Lui dit-il. Volontiers. Lui sans autre façon
Vous la jette sur le gazon,
Obéit à ce qu'elle ordonne;
A la tuer des mieux apprête ses efforts,
Lève sa cotte, et puis lui donne

D'un poignard à travers le corps.
 On a grande raison de dire
 Que pour les malheureux la mort a ses plaisirs,
 Jeanne roule les yeux, et pleure, enfin expire,
 Mais après les derniers soupirs
 Elle remercia le sire.
 Oh! le brave homme que voilà!
 Grand'merci Jésus, je suis la plus humble des vôtres:
 Les tuez-vous comme cela?
 Vraiment, j'en casserai bien d'autres.¹⁰

[One fine day Lady Germaine, having some need of water, sent Jeanne to the fountain; she ran, since her mistress was in a hurry. But while she was running, a sorry accident befell the poor creature. Her foot chanced upon a miserable stone she did not see; Jeanne stumbled over it, then fell and broke her pitcher. It were better a hundred times over to have broken her neck instead. Such a fine pitcher broken: what to do, and what would come of her? She hadn't a penny to buy another. What a scene her mistress would make, devilish as she was anyway! How could she avoid her wrath? What rage, and what a beating! Dare I ever appear again before her? No, no quoth she: I must rather kill myself. Let us kill ourselves. Happily, a neighbor close by, hearing this, came running; to console the afflicted girl he gave the best reasons he could, but however eloquent he was, she was not relieved. And the fair maid, still pulling her hair, streams flowing from her eyes, still wanted to die: that much was settled. Well, then, shall I kill you? he said. Please do. He without further ado tumbled her on the grass, obeying her desire; he put his best efforts into killing her, lifting her petticoats and stabbing her through with his dagger. For the miserable, it is said with good cause, death has its pleasures: Jeanne rolled her eyes, wept, and expired. But after her last sighs she thanked the gentleman. O what a fine man he was! Jesus! thank you: I am all yours. Do you kill them all like that? I think I could break some more.]

The illustration (figure 3.3), which like the other ones in the edition is doubtless by Eisen, remains a trifle ambiguous in that it is difficult to tell whether Jeanne's lover is beginning to lift her skirt or they are, rather, depicted after the fact ("Elle remercia le sire"). But the connection between the broken vessel and the loss of virginity—with more emphasis here, evidently, upon pleasure than loss—could not be more direct. The pitcher is left out, but there is a phallic end of a pipe protruding at the lower

right, and the couple are so positioned that, although he is standing above her, his hand is directly over her sex. The physical union of the couple is reinforced by their encapsulation in a compact circle at the center of the engraving; the only other round lines are those of the suggestive neck of the shattered jug and the semicircular opening of the connotative spring.

Tokens of moral fragility extend as well to nonliquid media, and they too run the gamut from the literal to the symbolic. But nothing, as we have said, can be completely literal in pictorial representation. For example, Nicolas Lavreince's *Le repentir tardif* (figure 3.4)¹¹ alludes strongly to the physical excitement of the sexual encounter by means of the lamp table that has been upset; this detail has to be read objectively as signifying some kind of violence, but it is also accompanied by a broken vase, which

3.3 Autereau, "La cruche." Eisen/Anon. (§44: 2:291).





3.4 *The belated regret*,
print. *Lavreince/Le
Villain*.

more firmly links the image to the allegorical *cruche cassée* category. Such signs, as this example makes rather clear, signify sexual activity without necessarily suggesting that anything nearly as precious as virginity is at stake—though that does seem to be the issue in such well-known Greuze examples as *Les oeufs cassés* (Metropolitan Museum, also engraved by Pierre Étienne Moitte). Schall, not known for his moralizing, uses the basket of fruit, itself a traditional symbol of innocence, in a similar way overturned, in combination with an encounter more frolicking than ominous, in *Le panier renversé* (engr. Boisson). In the case of Greuze's *Le malheur imprévu* (engraved by Nicolas de Launay), it is a mirror that lies shattered on the ground amidst the general disorder. All of these spilt, upset, and shattered objects, however real and motivated their connection with other components of the illustration, impel our reading in the direction of the symbolic by virtue of all the other such objects that at any given instance can come to mind. This paradigm of meaning, in other words, does not emerge from within the picture itself but from the picture's association with other pictures. Such a semantic configuration is found in any number of other readily identifiable motifs.

The mirror is a traditional iconic symbol of truth¹² but also of vanity (especially feminine vanity), and it continued to be used emblematically as such. Even the sultan's favorite mare is pictured in Diderot's *Les bijoux indiscrets* admiring herself in a mirror, for no specific textual reason other than the fact that her whole description is an allegory of human conduct, stressing vanity and sexuality.¹³ Given its satirical overtones, the mirror turns up quite frequently in the hands of putti or monkeys or other displacements of human satire. Edward Moore's *Fables for the Female Sex* includes a parable of "Love and Vanity," each claiming dominion over the world of women. To resolve their dispute they attack, each by appropriate means, a naïve passer-by: Cupid shoots her with an arrow, but Vanity has a better weapon:

But here the Dame, whose guardian care
Had to a moment watch'd the fair,
At once her pocket mirror drew,
And held the wonder full in view;
As quickly, rang'd in order bright,
A thousand beauties rush to sight,
A world of charms, till now unknown,
A world reveal'd to her alone;
Enraptur'd stands the love-sick maid,
Suspended o'er the darling shade,
Here only fixes to admire,
And centers ev'ry fond desire.
(§60, fable 16)

Francis Hayman's illustration captures just the final lines, which seal the moral lesson about the inherent dominance of vanity in woman. Prudence, who earlier refused to decide the quarrel, looks on at left (figure 3.5).

That an illustration may perfectly well engage such repertorial themes, to the point of seeming almost entirely comprehensible without reference to any particular text, and yet all the while relate quite specifically to details of some such text, is owing in large part to the thematic nature of literature itself. A good example of this is "Renaud contemplant Armide," from canto 16 of Tasso's *Jérusalem délivrée* (figure 3.6). The fact that it depicts the hero in the thrall of a sorceress would not by itself explain such details as the mirror, but like many of them—including the onlookers (Danois and Ubalde, sent out to find Renaud) and her bared breast—it is indeed explicit in the text:



3.5 "Love and Vanity." Moore, *Fables for the Female Sex*, no. 16. Hayman/Ravenet (§60). 3.6 Tasso, *Jérusalem délivrée*, canto 16. Gravelot/Née (§78: 2:143).

Elle est couché sur le gazon; Renaud est couché dans ses bras. Son voile ne couvre plus l'albâtre de son sein; ses cheveux épars sont le jouet des zéphyr. (§78: canto 16)

[They beheld the Queen, set with their knight
Beside the lake, shaded with boughs from sight:
Her breasts were naked, for the day was hot,
Her locks unbound waved in the wanton wind.]

And even in this langorous atmosphere, the moment chosen for illustration is quite localizable:

Les deux Guerriers, de l'asile qui les cache, contemplant leurs jeux et leur ivresse. Au côté de Renaud pendait un miroir, confident discret des amoureux mystères: Armide se lève, elle met le cristal entre les mains de son amant; ses yeux tout brillants de plaisir, y cherche son image; Renaud fait son miroir des beaux yeux de sa maîtresse. (§78: canto 16)

[The arméd pair
These follies all beheld and this hot fare.
Down by the lovers' side there pendent was

A crystal mirror, bright, pure, smooth, and neat,
 He rose, and to his mistress held the glass,
 A noble page, graced with that service great;
 She, with glad looks, he with inflamed, alas,
 Beauty and love beheld, both in one seat;
 Yet them in sundry objects each espies,
 She, in the glass, he saw them in her eyes.
 (Tasso, trans. Fairfax, stanzas 19–20)}

The passage following alludes both to the flowers she places in her tresses and to the rose (here on the ground) she will place for sensuous contrast on her lily-white breast. Thus are sexuality and feminine vanity at once heightened: “elle ne voit qu'elle-même. . . . Le paon superbe étala avec moins de complaisance l'orgueil de son plumage”¹⁴ [The jolly peacock spreads not half so fair / The eyed feathers of his pompous train (Tasso, trans. Fairfax, stanza 24)].

The point is not that the mirror as such is either a positive or negative attribute, but that it figures so strongly in allegorically erotic situations. Julien Eymard makes it clear that the mirror theme is not featured in a major way in the eighteenth century,¹⁵ but it nevertheless crops up with some regularity in contexts such as these. For instance, the extensive glosses for the plates in Abbé de Favre's *Quatre heures de la toilette des dames* includes the following for the illustration of canto 3, “Le petit pot de rouge de Junon” (figure 3.7):

Un boudoir éclairé d'un jour tendre: Europe y est assise à sa toilette; les trois Grâces, Aglaé, Euphrosine, Thalie, l'environnent sans la cacher: Aglaé est derrière elle, tenant ses cheveux d'une main, et de l'autre les développant dans toute leur longueur comme si elle se disposait à les ployer ou à les tresser, mais en effet pour en faire paraître toute la beauté: l'ensemble des traits d'Europe, doux et sensible, respire la gaieté, la dignité et le sentiment affable: l'Amour plus près de la toilette en examine l'effet avec attention, présentant lui-même le miroir: au côté opposé, des Nymphes admirent avec attention et une curiosité extrême un pot de rouge que tient une d'elles un peu détachée du groupe; Comus dans l'enfoncement, préside à la toilette dont il est le dieu. Au milieu de la planche, deux amours soutiennent une couronne de fleurs.

A vos côtés j'ai peint les Grâces,
 Et l'Univers à vos genoux.
 (§31, “Sujets des estampes”)

[A boudoir lit by soft morning light. Europa is seated at her toilet; the three Graces, Aglaia, Euphrosyne, Thalia, surround but do not hide her: Aglaia is behind her, holding her hair in one hand and with the other drawing it fully out as if preparing to fold or braid it, but in fact to display it in all its beauty. Europa's mild and delicate features all bespeak gaiety, dignity and kindly sentiment. Cupid, closer to her toilet, examines closely its effect, himself presenting the mirror; on the opposite side, Nymphs admire with close and rapt curiosity a jar of rouge held by one who stands somewhat aside from the others; Comus, at the rear, presides over this toilet of which he is the god. In the middle of the plate, two Cupids hold a crown of flowers.

Painting the Graces by your side
And all creation at your feet.]¹⁶



3.7 Favre, *Quatre heures de la toilette des dames*, chant 3. Leclerc/Halbou (§31).

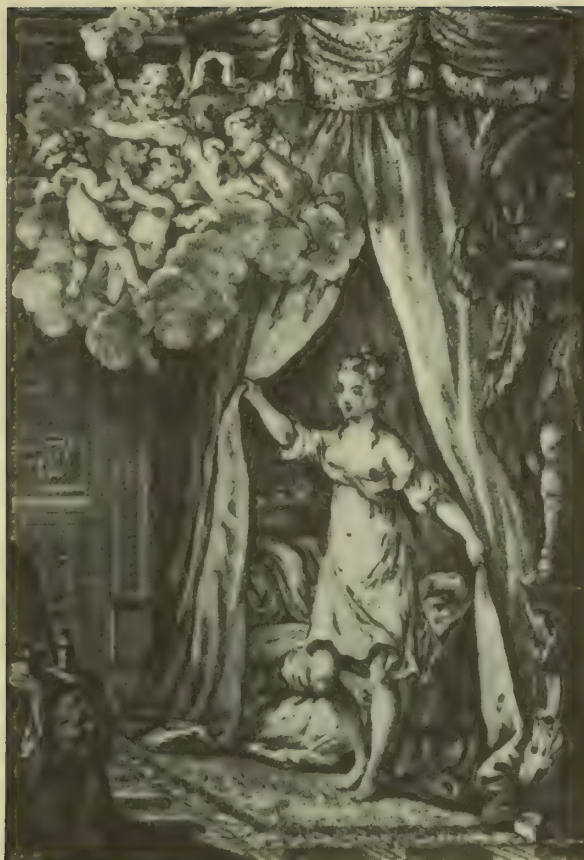
Indeed, the whole canto, a sort of extensive elaboration of the engraving (or vice versa), is based upon the remarkably banal idea that the lady's toilet, with its rouge and powder, is a good and lovely thing. Its central passage explains anecdotally why Europa's breast is exposed in the picture:

Un simple voile en un instant
Abandonne le sein qu'il cache:
Dieux! que d'attraits! mais promptement
Un voile plus ample s'attache;
Léger transparent de linon
Sur ses épaules se déploie:
Linon charmant! que l'art emploie
Pour le coup d'oeil de la raison!
Dans ses replis flotte, s'égare
Sa chevelure au clair châtain
C'est Aglaé qui s'en empare
Et la façonne de sa main . . .
(§31, canto 3)

[. . . Europa to her task has flown;
Removed her kerchief, given to the eye
Her maiden bosom's budding blooms;
Ye gods! how fair; but instantly
An ampler veil the place assumes:
Transparent folds of filmy lawn
Upon her shoulders lie displayed,
The filmy lawn that Art has made
For Wit's conclusions to be drawn.
The chestnut meshes of her hair
Float free from every formal band;
Aglæe lifts the mass with care
And holds it up on loving hand.
(Favre, trans. Keene, 36)]

The subject is of interest, to both artist and public, only for its amorous connotations; an elaborate tailpiece for the same canto shows Cupid pouring a quiverful of arrows onto a dressing table where a mirror figures prominently.

La toilette was a very common subject for independent prints as well as book plates, along with *le lever*, *le coucher*, and *le bain*—all conventional pretexts for portraying the nude; but in the *toilette* motif in particular



3.8 Favre, *Quatre heures de la toilette des dames*, chant 1. Leclerc/LeRoy (§31).

a large mirror is usually a central feature.¹⁷ Canto 1 of the same work, “L’Amour et Psyché” (figure 3.8), begins as a *lever* scene featuring a somewhat dreamy and scantily clad character, and quickly develops into a sensual *toilette* scene:

Psyché s’éveillant en sursaut à la fin d’un rêve, les cheveux épars, mais point échevelée; elle est agitée, mais son air est tendre et d’une douceur inquiète. Elle est debout, tenant de chaque main ses rideaux, qui restent unis par le faite: elle se trouve dans cette situation en face de sa toilette, et se regarde au miroir qui y est dressé: vers le ciel de la planche, entre le dais du lit et la corniche, l’Amour suivi d’un groupe de Songes s’envole en riant.

Les vrais atours de la beauté
Sont l’ouvrage de la Nature;

Et sa plus brillante parure,
Les roses de la Volupté.
(§31, canto 1)

[Psyche, awakening with a start at the end of a dream, her hair undone, but not dishevelled. She is disturbed, but her mein is tender and gently uneasy. She is standing, holding in each hand her bedcurtains drawn together at the top: in this position she is opposite her table, and beholds herself in the mirror which is thereupon. Towards the top of the plate, between the dais of the bed and the cornice, Cupid followed by a group of Dreams flies laughing away.

For Nature's grace is Beauty's brightest gem,
And Pleasure's roses make her anadem.
(Favre, trans. Keene, 19)]¹⁸

It is usually the face that is mirrored, but the exceptions are interesting, since the extension of vain preoccupation with facial beauty to the whole of the body implies greater attention to sexuality as such. The woman viewing all of herself seems to be trying to play reflexively the same voyeuristic role that the viewer of the engraving is playing with her. Oudry pictures La Fontaine's "Jeune veuve" still in mourning, casting a backward glance (her pose echoed by a woman in the mural) into a mirror—a pointed interpretation of a possibility that is no more than hinted at in the poem (figure 3.9):

L'autre mois, on l'emploie à changer tous les jours
Quelque chose à l'habit, au linge, à la coiffure:
Le deuil enfin sert de parure,
En attendant d'autres atours

(Book 6, fable 21)

[The next (month), some little change appears each morrow
In gown, or hair, or linen, till at last
Her weeds are almost as becoming
As what she'll wear when they are cast.
(Marsh, 182)]

Schall's *Les appas multipliés* shows a full-length nude standing before both a tall mirror and an oval one on a dresser, while she seems to be reaching for nothing more than a string of pearls to put in her hair; "multiplied" by different angles for the viewer, her charms are displayed to her own self-satisfied gaze as well (Perrot 1984: 66). Lest there be any doubt that the



3.9 La Fontaine, "The young widow." Oudry/Marvie and Beauvais (§46: 2:134).

implications of the mirror extend beyond mere vanity to sensual preoccupations, it should be noted that in the Gravelot-Cochin *Iconologie*, *Lascivité* is depicted admiring herself in a mirror (§37: 1.57).¹⁹

Such figures suggest a particular complaisance with the subject's specifically sexual attributes. Although apparently much more modest, *Sa taille est ravissante* also lends a sensual overtone to the business of the dressing table, since the woman seems to be holding her dress open the better to calculate her own charms, an implication that the legend corroborates by alluding to a budding breast pressing out against her bodice (figure 3.10):

Sa taille est ravissante
Et l'on peut déjà voir
Une gorge naissante
Repousser le mouchoir.²⁰

[Her shape is a delight, and already one can see the rising breast pressing out against her kerchief.]



3.10 *Her shape is a delight*, print. Baudouin/Le Beau.

At the same time, her eyes are fixed down and to her left, as if to suggest that another character just out of the picture is also benefiting from the view. As in the previous example, the dove atop the vanity also alludes to the mirror's sexual function, and for this reason doves thus perched were indeed a common decorative motif; the rose crowning the chair belongs to the same generally erotic iconic isotopy.

Although the rose can sometimes stand for virginity, as in the *Roman de la rose*, or for sex in general, it specifically alludes in this context to the attractions of the nipple or *bouton de rose*; this is quite patent in *Comparaison du bouton de rose*, where a rosebud is being held up to the breast and the two compared in the mirror (figure 3.11).²¹ It strikes one as a purely *visual* figuration of "comparison," but this effect only conceals the essential mediation of the whole notion by language: for it is only because the expression *bouton de rose* exists that the subject seeks to reassure herself of the viability of such poetic license. Moreover, the evidently sensual gist of her curiosity is more than slightly underscored by the bold aperture of her thighs. Such positioning cannot be dismissed as a merely coincidental aspect of the design: consider the fact that Boudard's *Iconologie* designates similarly spread legs as the very symbol of *effronterie* 'brazenness'; indeed, the entire subject as he describes it is remarkably parallel to this print: "elle

a la gorge découverte et se découvre aussi les cuisses. Son attribut selon P. Val. est une guenon qui regarde ses parties honteuses dans un miroir” [her breast is bared and she also bares her thighs. Her attribute according to P. Val. (?) est a chimpanzee looking at her pudendum in a mirror] (figure 3. 12). The animality as well as the ludicrousness attributed to her attitude is transposed to the monkey, who is actually doing what for her is only implied.

This notion of “comparison” is used humorously by Lavreince in *La comparaison*, in which two women vie for the lovelier bosom before the dressing table mirror (figure 3. 13); and by Schall, in a quite different way, in a painting bearing the same title but based instead on a comparison of two womens’ buttocks to those of a statue. This is, by the way, a dramatic instance in which the shift of medium lends a rather different cast to the understanding of a derivative engraving:²² the flesh tones of the figures flanking the statue cannot, as in the painting, contrast with the gray stone of the statue, and without that cue the whole humor of the comparison is more difficult to decipher.

Such a narcissistic-voyeuristic motif is quite fully developed in the combination of text and illustration in Pierre Ulrich Dubuisson’s *Tableau de la volupté*. For the section entitled “Le Matin,” we see Belzors peeking in on the fifteen-year-old Délie as she first puts on, then throws aside her corset,

3. 11 *Comparison of the rosebud*, print. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin/Dennel. 3. 12 *Effrontery*, from Boudard’s *Iconologie* (§ 14: 1:175).



and after the struggle sits panting intoxicated before her mirror (figure 3.14):

Il aperçoit... Ciel! quel spectacle!
Délie était voluptueusement
Devant son miroir inclinée
Sa taille n'était pas gênée
Dans les entraves d'un corset:
Et plus noble elle en paraissait:
Deux parfaites pommes d'albâtre
Présentaient à l'oeil enchanté,
Le tendre et délicat théâtre
Des soupirs de la volupté:
Belzors voit tout, Belzors s'enflamme
En détaillant mille beautés. . . .
Mais d'un corset couleur de rose
Il la voit soudain se saisir
Un tel dessein le fait frémir,
Il voudrait se plaindre et ne l'ose
Indiscret amant, taisez-vous,
De ce corset ne soyez plus jaloux;
Déjà je l'en vois affranchie,
Ne vous plaignez plus de Délie,
Elle le jette avec courroux.
A peine sa main nonchalante
Sur son sein l'avait attaché,
Que l'autre main impatiente
L'en a dans l'instant arraché.
De la gêne son sein s'irrite,
Avec plus de force il palpète,
Ses soupirs en sont plus fréquents:
De ses deux mains elle le presse,
Et bientôt une douce ivresse
Occupe et trouble tous ses sens.
(§30, 37–39)

[He spies... Heaven, what a sight! Délie is leaning voluptuously toward her mirror, her waist unconstrained in the shackles of her corset; and the more noble she appeared for it: two perfect alabaster apples offered to the enchanted eye the tender and delicate theater of delight's sighs. Belzors sees all, Belzors is inflamed in gazing upon a thousand charms. . . .



3.13 *The comparison*, print. Lavreince/Janinet. 3.14 Dubuisson, *Le tableau de la volupté*. Eisen/de Longueil (§30).

But suddenly he sees her take up a rose-colored corset; such a design makes him tremble; he would object but dares not. Silence, indiscrete lover, be not jealous of the corset; already I see her free of it; do not complain of Délie: she casts it off angrily; hardly had her careless hand fixed it to her breast than the other tears it away. Her breast rebels at the strain; it throbs with greater force; her sighs become more rapid. She presses it in her two hands, and soon a sweet intoxication invades and troubles all her senses.]

Hearing her utter his name, Belzors throws himself at her feet to reap the fruits of Délie's already sealed capitulation. Only this complete context makes it clear that Délie is pictured in the illustration at the last possible moment of the sequence of actions Belzors passively witnesses; there is a kind of strip-tease hesitation playing between the illustration (which comes ten pages earlier than this passage) and the poem, which itself takes some time to account for all the picture suggests, especially the corset on the floor²³ and the significance of Délie's hand. The intimacy of the *lever* convention works here in conjunction with several identifiable connotations of the mirror and of the glass door that provides a view. Again, as with flowing or shattered vessels, one always has to look beyond the purely accessory value of the mirror; not just "present" like chairs or doors, reflections always mean something.

Why should a woman reading be represented with her breast naked, as is the case for a small plaster statue (*Femme lisant*, figure 3.15) at the Musée Cognacq-Jay? The key to the connection between the nudity and the book is the quiver of arrows and the pair of doves (symbols of Cupid and Venus) at the statue's base. We are doubtless to assume it is a novel she is reading, but whatever it is, it has sexual connotations: these *she* does not express, although the sculptor, by allusion, does. Novels and letters play a large role in drawings of the period, and although they both relate to the theme of reading, their implications are rather different.

Letters are of course a central part of the commerce of everyday life in eighteenth-century society, yet correspondence of a routine sort is hard to make much use of artistically. (Étienne Jeaurat's *Le joli dormir*, cited below in Chapter 4, is one marginally effective way.) There are very few illustrations showing people writing, an act that seems to lack visual force; in portrait paintings, by contrast, the pen serves not infrequently an attribute of character. One means of giving some focus to the significance of reading was to lend a suggestion of erotic content to the reading matter. Thus, the fairly common representation of a woman holding a letter, such as Fragonard's *Love letter* at the Metropolitan Museum, usually implies that the missive entails a romantic—or simply sexual—proposition: in this case, aside from the title, such a meaning is suggested by the bouquet of flowers and, more subtly, by the Pekingese on the chair (as was suggested earlier, small, high-strung dogs usually carry overtones of sexual excitement). A print bearing another quite conventional title, *Le billet doux*,²⁴ appears at first glance fairly bland, until one notices that the woman is in a suspiciously awkward position, with one shoeless foot up on the sofa, and moreover that the pictures on the wall represent, one Leda and the swan, and the other a naked woman on a bed beside which a man is kneeling.²⁵

This reader is almost invariably female, a conceit that doubtless attaches to the more or less traditional assumption that serious reading and writing belonged to men, and that teaching a young woman to read was inviting trouble. Illiteracy is the most important form of ignorance constituting Arnolphe's method for bringing up a dutiful and dependent wife in Molière's *L'école des femmes* (1762):

Héroïnes du temps, Mesdames les savantes,
Pousseuses de tendresse et de beaux sentiments,
Je défie à la fois tous vos vers, vos romans,



3.15 *A Woman Reading*.
Anonymous (Musée
Cognacq-Jay).

Vos lettres, billets doux, toute votre science,
De valoir cette honnête et pudique ignorance.
(Act 1, scene 3)

[Heroines of our time, scholarly dames, you who utter tender and fine feelings, I defy your verse, your novels, your letters and love letters, all your knowledge to match this honest and modest ignorance.]

It is indeed her unintended ability to read and write which makes possible Agnès's initiation to the "science" of sentiment and dissimulation.

The book is a much richer signifier in this context. One has only to compare the two small paintings by Lavreince labeled *La lettre* and *Le roman*, both quite restrained and representing the same model in the two activities (Burollet 1980: no. 150–51). The letter seems in this instance to be one she has just written, and though it could have amorous overtones, there is no obvious clue. Her very peculiar posture and expression in the second case, however, not as she reads (her eyes, lifted from the book, look quizzically or perhaps mischievously toward the viewer), but

as she turns over in her mind something just read, certainly suggests that some frivolous and perhaps naughty thoughts have been culled from the book. This particular ambiguity is consistent in the pictorial uses of the novel. Being conventionally associated with a romantic evocation of love, novels inspire tenderness; but being sometimes gallant or risqué as well, they can inspire sensual fantasies. Usually this distinction, though, is not spelled out in the representation, and it is infrequent that any specific book title is designated.²⁶ In Simon René Baudouin's gouache *La lecture* at the Musée des arts décoratifs,²⁷ the subject seems to be losing herself in dreamy thoughts, having apparently unlaced her corsage, with the book dropping softly from her hand onto a combination table/doghouse.²⁸ Some ambiguity is maintained about the nature of her reading, however, by the fact that there are other, large tomes, along with other papers and a globe, on the table in front of her. A print entitled *Le boudoir* combines the same articles with a voyeuristic element and an ironic legend (figure 3. 16):

N'entrez pas... De vos avantages
Ne pouvez-vous de loin, à votre aise jouir:
Du moins laissez à vos ouvrages
Le talent heureux d'endormir.

[Do not enter. . . Can you not enjoy your privileges at leisure and at a distance? Leave to your writings the gift of putting people to sleep.]

Once more, it is impossible to say whether the verse was designed for the figure or vice versa; possibly both even refer to an anecdote that went the rounds, or to a popular play or ditty. It would seem that the man standing at the French doors is supposed to be the author of the book in question, and that there is, along with the obvious sarcasm about its soporific effect, an erotic suggestion whereby the "avantage" of exciting the woman may be exercised first by writ and subsequently in the flesh. On the other hand, why does he have his hands on the other woman; and is she resisting him or teasing him, and with respect to whom?

Dorat's "Hymne au baiser" further demonstrates the prevalence of such associations. It is evident, in the first place, that Dorat's whole little book on the *baisers* is predicated upon the already well-established bivalence of that word: if *baiser* suggested nothing more than a tender and innocent kiss, there would be no justification for beginning in this way the hymn addressed to it:

Don céleste, volupté pure
De l'univers moteur secret,



3.16 *The boudoir*, print.
Freudeberg/Maleuvre.

Doux aiguillon de la Nature,
Et son plus invincible attrait. . . .
(§20: 55)

[Pure joy by pitying heaven bestowed,
Lethargic matter's oft alarm,
Ah! Nature's most delightful goad,
And most unconquerable charm!
(Dorat, trans. Keene, 45)]

The headpiece of this introductory poem seems itself to relate only to the conclusion that, after evoking the power of the *baiser* specifically to the poet and invoking its constant aid—

Et puisses-tu, pour récompense,
Rencontrer souvent l'innocence,
Et la soumettre à tes plaisirs!
(§20: 59)

[So may you for your recompense
Ofttimes encounter innocence

Subdued to your prerogative.

(Dorat, trans. Keene, 49)]

—continues:

Puisse à ce prix, trompant sa mère,
La jeune fille de quinze ans,
Dans son alcôve solitaire
Méditer ton art dans mes chants,
Interroger son âme oisive,
Dévorer l'image expressive
De l'amoureuse volupté,
Ne voir que baiser dans ses songes,
Et soupçonner dans ces mensonges
Les douceurs de la vérité.

(§20: 60)

[Led by your law may sweet Fifteen,
Safe hidden from her mother's eyes,
Learn in my songs what kisses mean
As in her bed alone she lies!
Interrogate her pensive soul
And to her mind reveal the whole
Of pleasure's tempting ecstasy;
May she behold you in her dreams,
And learn to guess, from that which seems,
The sweetness of reality.

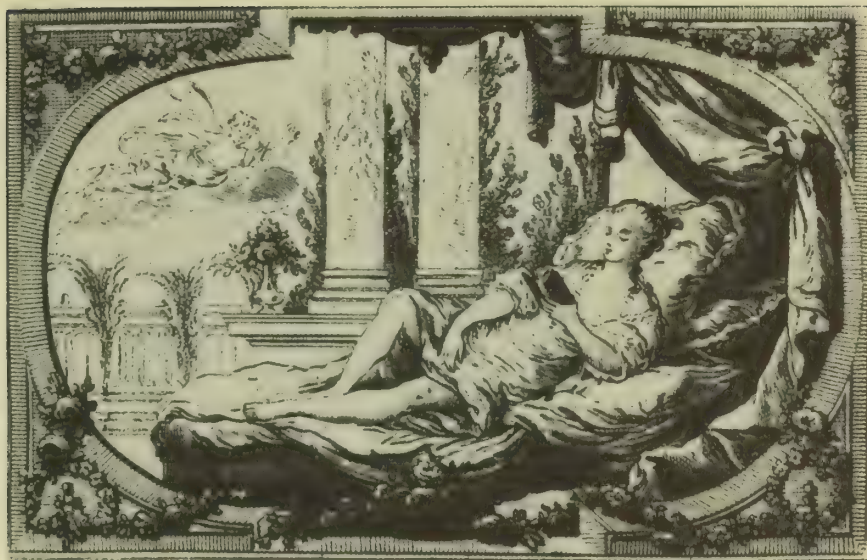
(Dorat, trans. Keene, 49–50)]

The book is, in this vision, precisely the seductive element that insinuates sensual thoughts into the young virgin, of whom, as the illustration suggests, one hand might continue to hold the book while the other investigates erotic sensations more directly. The garlands, the distant celestial voyeur, and the spread of her legs emphasize these connotations (figure 3.17).

In an oblique way this would seem to tie in with La Fontaine's argument, in "Les oies de frère Philippe," that the book is innocent in comparison with the real thing:

Chassez les soupirants, belles, souffrez mon livre;
Je répons de vous corps pour corps....

[Ye beauteous belles, beware each sighing swain,



3.17 "Anthem to the kiss," headpiece. Dorat, *Les baisers*. Eisen/Née (§20: 55).

Discard his vows: —my book with care retain;
 Your safety then I'll guarantee at ease.
 (La Fontaine, trans. Anon., 2:2)

He knows, though, that the distinction between the book and what it represents cannot be so literal as he here conveniently pretends; that, as Roland Barthes put it, "la passion vient des livres."²⁹ The Boucher catalog lists an engraving entitled *Femme lisant Eloyse et Abailar*,³⁰ which suggests something reminiscent of the reading about Lancelot and Guenevere that precipitated the sins of Francesca and Paolo in Dante's *Inferno*. There are two gouache versions of Lavreince's *Le repentir tardif* at the Musée Cognacq-Jay (Burolet 1980: nos. 156–57) of which one includes an overturned bedside table, complete with broken vase and candlestick, indicative of the excitement that preceded the moral (or ironic) afterthought in the title; but the second has instead an opened book on the floor beneath the edge of the bed, and this little item might be understood as the cause rather than the result of their activity.³¹

Such a suggestion is taken much further in two prints bearing only their titles. In *Le roman dangereux* we see once again a novel fallen to the floor, a loosened bodice, and the connotative garlands draped all over the room (figure 3.18); the woman is lying with her thighs apart, ready to be taken by the approaching male, in an elegant alcove complemented by

3.18 *The dangerous novel*, print. Lavreince/Helman.



an enormous mirror and Cupid's quiver and bow surrounded by a wreath. Apparently, the novel here is doubly "dangerous": it invites the mists of sensuous fantasy, and it causes one to drop her physical guard against encroachers. The title is incisive in that it supplies the critical adjective *dangereux*; but the word *roman* is important also. One can equally well doze off, after all, by reading philosophy or mathematics; only the novel would fulfill the particular role that reading serves in this semantic context. *Le midi* is more flagrant, and less decent (figure 3.19). It seems to recall the seventeenth-century pleasantry about "les romans qu'on ne peut lire que d'une main": the novel, which is barely visible in the print, has fallen from the woman's right hand to the ground, while her left is being put to frankly masturbatory use. All this is heightened by her odd position (she appears to be seated upon some sort of rattan garden sofa) which spreads her legs, one shoe dangling from the foot in the air. Here, the only voyeur, besides the statue, is the viewer of the plate. Although far from subtle here, there are enough stylized paintings in the eighteenth century of a woman hold-

ing a book in one hand with the other in her lap for Mary Sheriff to call the pose a “conventional depiction of masturbation” (1990: 108).

A higher preponderance of evidence has been drawn from outside of book illustration here than in other chapters, because these mechanisms of topical allusion operate equally well, whatever the visual medium. It is essential to recognize the broader world of art with which literary illustrations always maintain some degree of dialogue. Their distinguishing aspect with relation to those other contexts, though, is a tension or interference between this independent paradigm and the text that is ostensibly being illustrated. That text may of course contain its own level of symbolic allusion, which would not necessarily itself be visually encoded: these two levels of signification may function with some degree of autonomy.

Either a mirror or a book provides a focus within the frame on which the characters’ attention is fixed, and thus could be understood in function of an interior motivation that Michael Fried has called “absorption” (1980: *passim*). I do not feel, nonetheless, that illustrations can be as usefully



3. 19 *Noontime*, print.
Baudouin/De Ghendt.

divided as can paintings with respect to their "theatricality" and "absorption," principally because there is such a great difference in their range. In painting, where a sizable portion of the repertory is occupied by history and portraiture, the statistical preponderance of theatricality is bound to be higher; in illustrations, absorption would seem almost always to apply. There are occasional portraits, but mostly of authors, and serving as frontispieces to collected editions, but otherwise it is almost unheard of for a character in a book plate to appear conscious of anything not represented within the frame.

Any number of other symbols (among them animals, which are mentioned in Chapter 8) could similarly be shown to correlate with others *in context* in such a way as to reinforce specific connotations. Their function is usually not mechanically emblematic, but they retain nonetheless a measure of allegorical quality that will be more or less evident according to the way they interact with the surrounding signs. Of the examples surveyed here, the broken vessel or spilled liquid is the motif that is closest to filling that direct allegorical function; flowing water and mirrors become more problematic and varied in their connotations; and books, which can be highly coded emblems (all emblem books contain many images with books in them, sacred books among others) at one end of the scale, can be almost indifferent objects in the domestic landscape at the other. The relevant text for assessing each one, itself understood as polysemic, is an essential ingredient of this context, but it does not suffice to relate the isolated visual token separately to the text: *all* the elements interact, potentially all the words and all the images, at varying degrees of intensity and reinforcement. It is a semic network that has to be explored, whether or not it is conceptualized in those terms: one seeks to grasp what semes emitted by the text are echoed by the same or isotopic semes in the image. At one level this is, of course, like understanding language, a totally automatic process. But the more one looks at it, the more one realizes how complex are its workings and how subtle some of its repercussions.

4 *Visual Disclosures*

Just as the divorce from allegory is never absolute, other renditions of subjects analogous to the one at hand are never wholly absent. Although we encounter many illustrations that in all appearance refer specifically and exclusively to their "own" text, there is always a potentially wider network of meaning to which they relate once we can identify substantive resemblances between them and apparently unconnected illustrations to other works. Once this process is set in motion, these reminiscences of the already seen seem to resonate for the reader and viewer just as they supposedly did in the minds of the artists.

Each of the remaining chapters in this book deals with a cluster of related visual themes, ones that, following this method, thrust themselves upon our attention by their very recurrence. That many of them possess either in themselves or in context a degree of erotic content reflects one of the dominant trends in book illustration in general. A double process of selection, first by publishers of the kinds of texts they will have illustrated, second by the publishers or artists of the scenes they will represent, assures these particular motifs of a proportionately large role in the overall spectrum of illustration, even if there are no statistics available to demonstrate this. Since it is inevitable, too, that the present author has performed a further and drastic selection among all engravings extant, that sometimes subjective process may have contributed to their relative weight. Although it could have exaggerated their preponderance, however, this factor could not call into question their existence, either individually or paradigmatically. It would in any case be true that my list is only partial, and that it is put forward as proof not of everything but of something, not in the guise of a complete repertory but as limited evidence of a demonstrable trend.

It quickly becomes obvious to what degree these motifs privilege a point of view and with it an erotic sensitivity commanded by thoroughly mas-

culine preoccupations. The three aspects of the male gaze described by E. Ann Kaplan (after Laura Mulvey) in terms of cinema are essentially applicable here. They are the camera eye (“while technically neutral, this look . . . is inherently voyeuristic and usually ‘male’ in the sense that a man is generally doing the filming”); the representation within the narrative of male watching female; and the look of male spectator, which imitates the first two (Kaplan 1983: 30). For our subject, too, one can assume, transposing the terms just slightly, that the artist’s eye is a male one, as is—typically though certainly not always—the reader or viewer’s, looking through a page-frame as voyeuristic as any projector-screen. Only rarely can we test the impact of these paradigms against analogous work by a female artist or a record of the female-as-reader’s reaction. The male gazing at the female within the frame is also common, and unidirectional. The same suppositions hold as for the male authors, narrators, and readers whose perspectives dominate but do not altogether suffocate those of women. The reason why this is so is, of course, not specifically literary, but derives from a social and historical situation. But it justifies the apparent gender imbalance in the materials treated here; otherwise, I could be fairly accused of telling only half the story. There is no question that another, complementary story can validly be sought, and in that sense the survey presented here has no pretensions to completeness. It instead attempts to remain cognizant of its inherent limitations, which are those imposed by any direct use of the available evidence.

Christian Soldiers (noun, feminine)

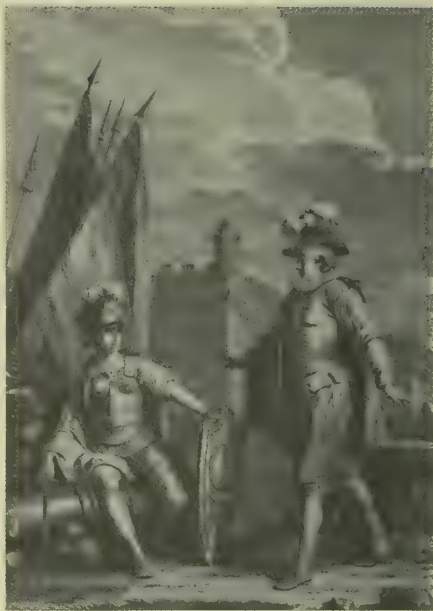
Although the genteel amorous mythology of the eighteenth century had little room for any form of sexuality that was not conventionally heterosexual, there was a persistent fascination with femininity in male disguise, and vice versa. The starkest form of the transvestite woman is the figure of the female warrior. Mysterious knights bearing enigmatic ciphers show up at jousts in all sorts of medieval tales, but the only variants of that motif that seem to retain much interest for illustrators of the eighteenth century are those that concern knights who turn out to be women. However it is to be interpreted historically—Rousseau protested that in French society both men and women had forgotten how to belong to their own sex—female usurpation of masculine potency underlies these metamorphoses.

Two literary legends, closely allied to religious ones, feature women warriors. It bears mentioning that they are not in fact the only ones possible: the most classic form of the myth—although a confused and variable

one—is the amazon, yet in this period one encounters few allusions to her. No hermaphrodite, the amazon was truly woman, but the traditional image stressed her virile attributes and as such made of her an inappropriate embodiment, according to the prevailing sexual models, of masculine desire.¹ The subjects I refer to are Tasso's Christian epic, on the one hand, and the legend of Joan of Arc, on the other—essentially in its degraded or parodic form, namely, Voltaire's *La pucelle d'Orléans*. Their common and distinguishing feature is that, while the warrior-heroine is valiant, she is also sexually attractive; and that this fact is first dissimulated in the narrative, awaiting an appropriate and dramatic revelation in due course.

These are the points that the illustrators regularly stress, while retaining at the same time an intriguing degree of ambiguity. Gravelot depicts Clorinda's battle with Tancred in canto 3 of Tasso's *Jérusalem délivrée* at the point where her *helmet* is cast off, thus loosening her wavy locks and revealing to Tancred her identity as the woman he loves: "ses cheveux d'or flottent au gré des vents, et un guerrier redoutable devient une céleste beauté" [her golden hair blew in the wind, and a formidable warrior became a celestial beauty] (figure 4.1). In fact, the scene seems to be a conflation of two separate, specific textual moments. In the first, their initial charge, "each delivers a blow to the other's visor: their lances splinter, but the chords attaching Clorinda's helmet are snapped by the blow: she is left bare-headed and disarmed"; it is at this point that Tancred suddenly recognizes her. But his gesture in the engraving relates rather to a slightly later moment in their combat where Clorinda, "forgetting that she had lost her helmet" (canto 3), is arrested by Tancred, who wants before battle to confess his love for her. This may explain why his shield has symbolically fallen to the ground, though this is not in the text and they should no longer be on the same spot where she was first uncovered. What is most important, though, is that in the uncertain interplay between text and image, it is *as if* Tancred, on the left, had previously failed to notice that her molded, evidently feminine breastplate identified her already as a woman, although literally that of course makes no sense in the narrative. That visual cue seems, in consequence, to constitute a sort of subliminal wink of complicity to the reader. In the story Clorinda always passes as a conventional (male) hero until she does something that brings her true sexual identity to light. What sets her apart from conventional amazons is precisely her comeliness; she can, and is willing to, inspire passion.²

Such "martial maids" who emerge during the Renaissance are, while "always fit opponents for the mightiest men," at the same time fully feminine in their erotic attraction; when unhelmeted or unarmored, "the



4.1 Tasso, *Jérusalem délivrée*, canto 3. Gravelot/Simonet (§78: 1:71). 4.2 "The angel that once guarded the gates of Paradise—there is your image. . . ." Gessner, "Chanson d'un suisse à sa maîtresse sous les armes." Le Barbier/Halbou (§34: 123).

unusual beauty of the maid strikes every beholder."³ Militarily, Clorinda appears like the amazon as a usurpation of male potency, but the threat implied in this image is contained and countered by the assurance of her equally assertive womanliness. A fascination both literary and pictorial with this tantalizing ambivalence is further echoed in Jean-Jacques Le Barbier's two plates for Gessner's "Chanson d'un Suisse à sa maîtresse sous les armes" (figures 4.2 and 4.3). The woman's military posture (not to mention virility) is underscored by placing her on a cannon. The historical anecdote invoked (the siege of Zurich) leads one to suppose that the women who defended the bastions were simply substituting for their men in their armor; Gessner's text indeed distinguishes between the violence the armor does to the female breast and the fully feminine exposure of the leg, even better than in civil garb:

Quoi! le dur acier ose presser cette taille si souple, ce sein d'albâtre et de rose: hélas! je ne le vois plus palpiter sous l'envieuse armure!

Heureux encore, je vois ce genou mollement arrondi; je le vois ce pied mignon qu'une robe traînante dérobaît à mes regards.

L'ange qui jadis veillait aux portes du Paradis, voilà son image, jeune Ericie, sous ce vêtement belliqueux. (§34: 123)

[How dare hard steel to squeeze her supple waist, her breast of alabaster and rose! Alas, I can no longer see it throbbing beneath the envious armor! Yet happily I see the gently rounded knee; I see her lovely foot that the train of her dress used to hide from my view. The angel that once guarded the gates of Paradise—there is the image of young Ericie under her warlike garment.]

Le Barbier's breastplates (the two are curiously not identical) instead stress sexuality, combining the military and feminine into one single—but sexually identified—trait.⁴ Other attributes contribute to this conflation: banners are balanced, in the tailpiece, by the torch of desire, while the bow and quiver of arrows can at once allude to the woman's valor and to Cupid's intervention.

Two other tailpieces constituting ironic reductions of this idea occur at the end of canto 6 of Tasso's *Jérusalem délivrée*, both representing a jealous Hermione assuming Clorinda's proper role by donning her armor, echo the suggestive notion of conspicuously feminine form (figure 4.4), making it quite clear from its solid, one-piece construction that this is a rigid and thus indelibly female breastplate, and not just mail, which might take on the curvature of whatever bust it protects. A later and more statuesque de-



4.3 Gessner, "Chanson d'un Suisse à sa maîtresse sous les armes," tailpiece. Le Barbier/Anon. (§34: 124).

piction of the same scene (figure 4.5) even reinforces visually the hardness of the medium (which is also stressed in the verse): observed closely, the solid concentric circles which form the convexities of the breastplate (figure 4.6) contrast with the dotted curves used conventionally in engraving to represent more supple *rondeurs*, that of legs, necks, torsos, or breasts in particular (figure 4.7). The necklace on the table fulfills the poetic celebration of her beauty as manifested in her state between costumes: “sans parure elle n’en est que plus belle: chaque ornement qu’elle ôte, découvre un trésor de plus” [without ornament she is all the lovelier; each one she doffs uncovers a new treasure] (canto 6).⁵ Similarly, in a pastiche on this kind of scene, Marillier in *Le Caloandre fidèle*, a longish story translated by Caylus,⁶ has Léonide facing the viewer to display her well-contoured bosom: this despite the fact that she is explicitly fighting Caloandre under the arms and colors of Léandre, whose death she is seeking to avenge, and in such masculine disguise remains, like Clorinda, quite unknown to her adversary until her helmet falls off (figure 4.8). Most remarkably, in this instance even nipples are visible on the breastplate, as if rather than clad in military steel she were a bronze nude from the waist up.

These examples reveal something fundamental about the usual rules of illustration. Text and figure in this regard do not work in the same way, for what is specifically disguised in the one is specifically revealed in the other. In language, which is infinitely more subtle than the stylized representation of engravings, sexual ambiguity is more easily accommodated, and a semic balance more delicately maintained, between the known and the unknown. It is as if illustrations, in contrast, cannot be properly read

4.4 Tasso, *Jérusalem délivrée*, canto 6, tailpiece. Gravelot/LeRoy (§78: 1:208).





4.5 "She arms herself alone with the help of she who is to accompany her flight." Tasso, *Jérusalem délivrée*, canto 6. Le Barbier/Delvaux (§80: 1:178).

unless the woman is marked as such, even if she is diegetically supposed to have been outwardly indistinguishable from a man until the disclosure that takes place at the precise narrative moment represented. In other words, the picture *must* encode sexual identity (just as, more generally, it must always make character identity clear), even if to do so is logically inconsistent with the text's narrative perspective. In such a situation illustration's own imperatives supersede the normally assumed rule of congruence between the two media. An inescapable factor in this process is precisely the different ontological status of text and image. In a diachronic text, a fact like a certain character's gender can be signaled once and then left in the background, already assimilated even if not featured for much of the subsequent reading. But the engraving is constrained, lest a misreading occur, to represent synchronically the warrior and her sex at the same time: were her femininity not signified, the reader would mistake the action represented for some other scene involving only men.

4.6 Tasso, *Jérusalem délivrée*, canto 6 (detail).
Le Barbier/Delvaux
(§80: 1:178).



There is further evidence for this particular semic function in the illustrations of Ariosto. In canto 3, Bradamant in armor is shown in Merlin's gothic cave as Melissa ("ungirdled, barefoot, and with loosened hair")⁷ conjures spirits representing her future progeny by Rogero (figure 4.9). Merlin's tomb is in the background and the surrounding vapor suggests the supernatural or visionary nature of the scene. It would seem that the artist had seen the late sixteenth-century Italian plate representing this scene along with others from the same canto. There is an interesting difference, however, in that the earlier one shows the women distinctly standing within a magic circle for protection; Sir John Harington's classic translation renders it thus:

This done, she takes the damsel by the hand,
Exhorting her she should not be afraid,
And in a circle causeth her to stand,
And for her more security and aid
And, as it were, for more assurèd band
Upon her head some characters she laid;
Then having done her due and solemn rites,
She doth begin to call upon the sprites.⁸

In this case, however, there are no "characters" on the head; the artist has instead understood the *pentacle* to be something suspended overhead and



4.7 Dorat, "La comédie" (detail). Eisen/De Ghendt (§21).

the circle on the floor is no longer prominent. But curiously, Bradamant's breast seems here to be covered only by a pliable material conforming less metallically than would a breastplate, and this seems to relate to the fact that in this scene her sexual identity is not in question: for Melissa, like the reader, knows perfectly well who Bradamant is, and that she is destined to beget the generations parading before her in a vision.⁹

In the very next canto, however, we find Bradamant once more in a stylized, convex breastplate—of quite a different design from the previous examples, and lacking the concentric circles (figure 4.10); and this change coincides paradoxically with a narrative shift, since she has once more *disguised* her sex so that she can fool Brunello and take from him the magic ring, thereby defeating the necromancer Atlas who has been carrying off all the beautiful women on his flying hippogriff. (It is Brunello who is tied to a beech tree in the background, although he is supposed to have been left up on the mountain.) The enchanter has with him a magic book, which he has been decoyed into putting down, as well as a magic shield, which has been encased:

That wretch had left on the ground the book that was doing all his fighting, and was running up with a chain that he was wont to carry girded on for use like that. . . . The lady soon had him lying on the ground. . . .

She, intending to cut off his head, hastily raises her victorious hand, but when she sees his face she suspends her stroke, as though despising such base vengeance. (Ariosto, trans. Gilbert 1:48)

Atlas is himself enchained and, although he manages to make himself disappear along with his mysterious castle, Rogero is freed and thus acquires the hippogriff and magic shield. Therefore, the representation of hard metal armor of designedly female configuration can be understood to signify specifically that although this character is a woman, the other characters in the illustration are unaware of it.¹⁰ Bradamant is not the only person disguised in the story; indeed, near the end (canto 45) she will battle all day with the supposed Leon, the prize being her own hand in marriage. Her own sexual identity being no longer at issue, it is not stressed in the Cochin illustration, although there is a very considerable erotic investment in the encounter, which is underscored in the text by a comparison of her to an overcharged race horse.¹¹ Accordingly, the illus-

4.8 "Cruel woman,
cease your scorn; your
hardness of heart alone
will end my days."
Marini, *Le Caloandre
fidèle*. Marillier/Borgnet
(§15: 4:23).





4.9 Ariosto, *Roland furieux*, canto 3. Anon. [Cochin] (§2: 1:49). 4.10 Ariosto, *Roland furieux*, canto 4. Anon. [Cochin] (§2: 1:73).

tration lacks sexual identification: the characters are distinguished only by Leon's double-headed eagle insignium, borne by Rogero, and the fact that Bradamant alone attacks while Rogero is content to defend himself.

Rejecting such a visual conundrum, Cochin takes a completely different approach in his illustrations to Tasso, choosing instead to seek a visual equivalent of the ambiguity that confronts the other characters. For example, in his equivalent to figure 4.1 above, Clorinda's hair is prominent but the sexual marking of her breastplate is studiously uncertain; although it is slightly rounded in form, it is also partially obscured by a sort of scarf trailing across it (§77: 1:76). In the illustration paralleling figures 4.4 and 4.5, the armor awaiting Erminia is, like the elegant clothing she has just taken off, scattered in numerous, fairly unspecific pieces on the floor (§77: 1:192): the artist thus avoids the need for determining the form of the breastplate.¹² When in the next canto she approaches some peasants to ask for help, her breast suggests only the faintest hint of convexity and in any case is veiled by a cloth identifiable as such both by its softness and by a design woven into it (canto 7).¹³ Again, in Clorinda's death scene, when Tancred, who has driven his sword between the breasts of this "un-

known warrior," removes her helmet and recognizes her, Cochin has a sort of t-shirt covering her torso (canto 12). He thus achieves much the same result in a different way, encoding the feminine identity of the armored figure by the presence of a veil that covers what is, from the standpoint of representation, the most problematic part of her body. Although the remedy is pure artifice, in the sense that it is presumably not justified by anything Cochin knew about the vestimentary practices of knights, it enables him to escape the visual absurdity that seemed in earlier illustrations to blind the other characters to the obvious.

It is precisely such erotic ambiguity that Voltaire and his illustrators exploit in his parodic reworking of the *pucelle* legend—"a wickedly funny, racy, bawdy, clever and skilful piece of mischief," in the words of Marina Warner, virtually the only comic rendition of the legend ever—and for reasons intimately related to Voltaire's philosophical mission (1981: 239). Warner shows how many myths the image of Jeanne conflates: traditionally assimilated to the biblical Judith, she also, thanks to her name, which evokes a bow (though *d'Arc* is probably spurious), is a figure of Diana the huntress, on the one hand, and the amazon, on the other. Playing frequently on the ambiguity of Jeanne, who dressed as a man but more specifically as a soldier, Voltaire creates what is essentially the epic of Jeanne d'Arc's virginity; it turns on endless narrow escapes for her maidenhead and in the process constantly emphasizes the eminently sexual body she protects under her austere military regalia. Voltaire thus calls into question the very "martial maid" compromise alluded to above: his Jeanne wants to deny her sexuality, which everyone around her is out to uncover. Indeed, the motif is hardly limited to Jeanne herself. The illustration of canto 3 by Nicolas André Monsiau (figure 4.11) concerns Agnès, who, sporting Jeanne's armor, has fallen into English hands and been turned over to Chandos. The legend, taken from the couplet:

Chandos, pressé d'un aiguillon bien vif,
La dévorait de son regard lascif.
(Voltaire 1970: 314)

[Chandos awake—how flowed thy boiling blood,
When at thy side thou sawest the fair one sad . . .
(Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 40: 114)]

does not, in fact, designate the moment chosen for illustration; it is a textual quotation, neighboring the scene represented, but—a frequent practice—is adopted less for its total accuracy as link from text to image than



4. 11 "Chandos awake—
how flowed thy boiling
blood. . . ." Voltaire,
La pucelle d'Orléans,
canto 3. Monsiau/Ponce
(§88: 1:58).

for its suitability (lapidarity, grammatical isolability) to serve as legend. The actual textual counterpart of the engraving in fact lends itself less well to this purpose but, on the other hand, explains better what is going on:

Monsieur Chandos, hélas que faites-vous?
Disait Agnès d'un ton timide et doux.
Pardieu, dit-il, tout héros anglais jure,
Quelqu'un m'a fait une sanglante injure.
Cette culotte est mienne, et je prendrai
Ce qui fut mien où je le trouverai.
Parler ainsi, mettre Agnès toute nue,
C'est même chose; et la belle éperdue
Tout en pleurant était entre ses bras,
Et lui disait: non je n'y consens pas.
(Voltaire 1970: 315)

{"Oh! Mister Chandos, leave me now alone;
 What are you doing? Prithee, Sir, forbear."
 "Ods zounds," quoth he—(all English heroes swear),
 "Some one was guilty of a crying sin,
 Those are my breeches which your limbs are in,
 And when I find that which by right is mine,
 I'll have it, I protest, by powers divine."
 To argue thus and Agnes to unclothe,
 Was the same thing; the fair one, something loth,
 Wept struggling in his arms against the intent,
 Then screamed full loud—"No, I do not consent."
 (Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 40: 114–15)]

It is, of course, in part the seriousness of such formal refusals that Voltaire is mocking, and the artist has no more exaggerated Agnès's defensive ferocity than did Voltaire. The huge spread of the tent's open flap, paralleled by the angle of Agnès's lower legs, seems to suggest a receptive vulva.

Agnès is disguised again in canto 6, not for combat this time but for flight; she has taken "chemise, mules, robe . . . jusqu'au bonnet de nuit" [gown, slippers, robe . . . even his night cap] from Chandos's wardrobe, only to be pursued into the forest by Monrose precisely because he mistakes her for Chandos—until she falls down (figure 4.12). The engraving's legend,

La jument bronche et la belle éperdue,
 Jetant un cri dont retentit la nue,
 Tombe à côté, sur la terre étendue.

again is only partially adequate, for the text once more emphasizes the particularly sexual nature of the resulting revelation:

Le page arrive aussi prompt que les vents,
 Mais il perdit l'usage de ses sens,
 Quand cette robe ouverte et voltigeante
 Lui découvrit une beauté touchante,
 Un sein d'albâtre et les charmants trésors
 Dont la nature enrichissait son corps.
 (Voltaire 1970: 364–65)

[Swift as the wind, Monrose arriving stared,
 For at the sight his wondering wits were scared;
 As 'neath Lord Chandos' robe, then floating wide,
 Fair Agnes' lovely charms his eyes descried;

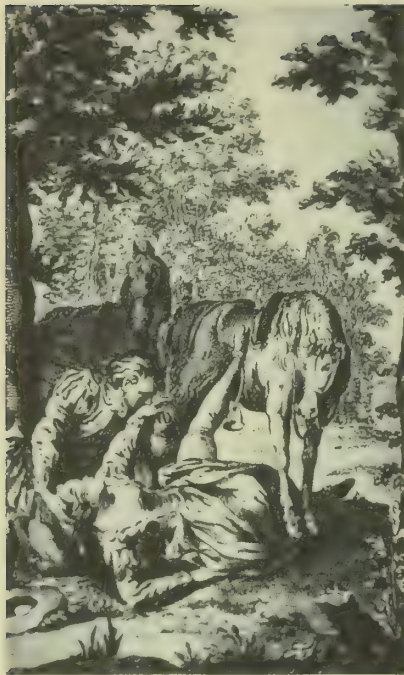


4.12 "The palfrey
stumbled, when the
fainting fair, / Wafting
a shriek that echoed
through the air. . . ."
Voltaire, *La pucelle
d'Orléans*, canto 6. Mon-
siau/Le Mire (§88:
1:99).

A breast of lilies, symmetry that scorned
All earthly frames, by Venus' self adorned.
(Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 40: 201–2)}

Another, anonymous illustrator chose to neglect completely the attire described in the text and render her much more essentially feminine, in flowing dress and fancy bonnet, even highlighting her stockinged leg—apparently snagged in the saddle straps for better exposure—more than her chest (figure 4.13). Still, it is presumably this same artist who for canto 13 does represent the breast-centeredness of Jeanne's physical allurements, again based entirely upon the surprise of its untimely revelation (figure 4.14). Chandos indeed has not known the identity of his adversary until this instant:

Son quadrupède un haut le corps lui fit,
Qui dans le pré Jeanne d'Arc étendit



4. 13 Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 6. Anon. (§86). 4. 14 Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 13. Anon. (§86).

Sur son beau dos, sur sa cuisse gentille,
 Et comme il faut que tombe toute fille.
 Chandos pensait qu'en ce grand désarroi
 Il avait mis ou Dunois ou le roi.
 Il veut soudain contempler sa conquête:
 Le casque ôté, Chandos voit une tête
 Où languissaient deux grands yeux noirs et longs.
 De la cuirasse il défait les cordons.
 Il voit, ô ciel! ô plaisir! ô merveille!
 Deux gros tétons de figure pareille,
 Unis, polis, séparés, demi-ronds,
 Et surmontés de deux petits boutons
 Qu'en sa naissance a la rose vermeille.
 (Voltaire 1970: 473–74)

[Her quadruped, those parts to heaven displayed,
 Which Joan unveiled upon the verdant glade;

Her well-turned back, plump limbs, in one word all,
 She fell, in short, as maidens ought to fall.
 Chandos conceiving that to this dread plight,
 He had reduced the King of Dunois' knight;
 To view the vanquished on a sudden led,
 Withdrew the helm, when he beheld a head,
 Where languishing two large black eyes were placed.
 Quickly the thongs of breastplate he unlaced:
 Oh Heaven! Oh wonder! lo! his optics strike
 Two swelling breasts in contour both alike;
 Half-globes, soft polished, where two central studs
 Arising, view in glow with coral buds,
 Which in its birth the fragrant tree discloses,
 That ope's to blushing spring its vermil roses.
 (Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 41: 87–88)]

Another point in Voltaire's satire is the euphemism *quadrupède*, since Jeanne by way of classical parody mounts a winged (and supernatural) ass who also, by a special sarcastic turn, represents sexual desire:

Il nourrissait dès longtemps dans son âme
 Pour la pucelle une discrète flamme,
 Des sentiments nobles et délicats.
 Très peu connus des ânes d'ici-bas.
 (Voltaire 1970: 475)

[Long had his bosom been love's hidden seat,
 He nourished for the maid a flame discreet;
 A chastely noble sentimental glow,
 But little known to asses here below.
 (Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 41: 89)]

The implication of bestiality is the ultimate sacrilege that could be imputed to the memory of Jeanne d'Arc, and this, too, will be repeated subsequently both by Voltaire and by certain of his illustrators.

Another approach to the mockery of the national heroine is to divest her so completely of her armor that she is found in the ludicrous position of combatting utterly naked. In the eleventh canto she attacks in just this woeful state the English band who have invaded a convent. Logically, this is a simple reversal of the transvestite heroism of Jeanne highlighted earlier; now her sex is advertised in the most flamboyant fashion, so that

to at least one Englishman the paragon of chastity is merely a party to the general orgy going on around her:

Jeanne était nue; un Anglais impudent
Vers cet objet tourne soudain la tête,
Il la convoite, il pense fermement
Qu'elle venait pour être de la fête.
Vers elle il court et sur sa nudité
Il va cherchant la sale volupté.
(Voltaire 1970: 436)

[Joan was *en cuerpo*, when a Briton's eyes,
With look unblushing, greet the wished-for prize;
He covets her, and thinks some maiden gay
Has sought the sisters to enjoy the fray;
Then flies the fair to meet, and forthwith seeks
To taint her modesty with loathsome freaks. . .
(Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 41: 44)]

He is the first one killed. All the rest are too busy raping the nuns to think of defending themselves:

Ces mécréants au grand oeuvre attachés,
N'écoutaient rien, sur leurs nonnains juchés,
Tels des ânon broutent des fleurs naissantes,
Malgré les cris du maître et des servantes.
Jeanne qui voit leurs impudents travaux,
De grande horreur saintement transportée,
Invoquant Dieu, de Denis assistée,
Le fer en main vole de dos en dos,
De nuque en nuque et d'échine en échine,
Frappant, perçant de sa pique divine,
Pourfendant l'un alors qu'il commençait,
Dépêchant l'autre alors qu'il finissait,
Et moissonnant la cohorte félonne;
Si que chacun fut percé sur sa nonne,
Et perdant l'âme au fort de son désir,
Allait au diable en mourant de plaisir.
(Voltaire 1970: 437)

[Each miscreant bent on sin and void of shame,
Heard nought, attentive only to his dame;



4.15 “‘He wears my
helm and under vest-
ments too.’ / Joan
reasoned justly, she
had truth to quote.”
Voltaire, *La pucelle
d’Orléans*, canto 11.
Moreau/Simonet (§85:
11:198).

Thus asses will ’mid flowers their course pursue,
Spite of the cries of man and master too.
Joan, who their deeds audacious thus describes,
Transported feels a saintly horror rise;
Invoking Heaven, and backed by Denis’ power,
With glave in hand, of blows she deals a shower,
From nape to nape, and thence from spine to spine,
Cutting and slashing with her blade divine:
Transpiercing, for intended crime the one,
Another striking for offences done;
Miscreants bedewing with a sanguine flow,
Each for profaning gentle nun—laid low,
Whose soul thus speeding by foul transport fed,
Dying in sinful joy, to Satan sped.
(Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 41: 44–45)]

Only one, Wharton, manages to shift his attention and confront the danger, and he turns out to be the very one who is wearing her own armor:

La voyant nue il sentit des remords,
 Sa main tremblait de blesser ce beau corps.
 Il se défend et combat en arrière,
 De l'ennemie admirant les trésors,
 Et se moquant de sa vertu guerrière.
 (Voltaire 1970: 439)

{To view her naked filled him with remorse,
 To wound that body robbed his arm of force,
 He but defends himself and backward moves,
 Admiring of his foe the charms he loves;
 Those treasures which impel his heart to scorn
 The martial virtues which her soul adorn.
 (Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 41: 46)}

Moreau's plate is dense and angular, contrasting the gothic hardness of stone, wood, and steel with the sweeping vulnerability of limbs and robes, Wharton's armor with Jeanne's flesh (figure 4.15).¹⁴ Jeanne d'Arc naked is the exact, paradoxical reversal of Jeanne the transvestite warrior—the myth exposed to open daylight, stripped of both its spiritual and physical pretensions. The sacrilege in both poem and image is flagrant.¹⁵

Revelations

Although the figure of a woman in armor may be a favorite (because extreme) form of provocative sexual dissimulation, it is hardly the only one. The novels and comedies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are replete with masqueraded characters, often involving a change of sex, although sexual attraction is only occasionally a dominant aspect of that situation. Louvet de Couvray's *Les amours du chevalier de Faublas* is largely based on extended scenes where the chevalier plays female personae. The first of these sets the pattern by describing the advances he entertains from a husband and wife, simultaneously vying for his/her attentions while dressed as a girl, and two of the illustrations by Marguerite Gérard—exceptional in that they were the work of a woman—are based on passages exploiting its ambiguities. Symmetry of composition (figure 4.16) here corresponds to the quandary of a disguised Faublas framed between two spouses, each of whom desires him/her; the woman wears a conventional ball gown, but Faublas is, according to the text, costumed in “un habit d’amazone complet, tel que le portent des dames anglaises quand elles montent à cheval” [a complete Amazon outfit, such as is worn by English

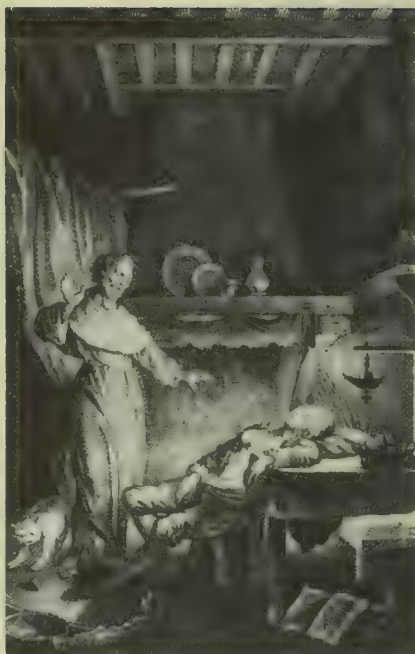
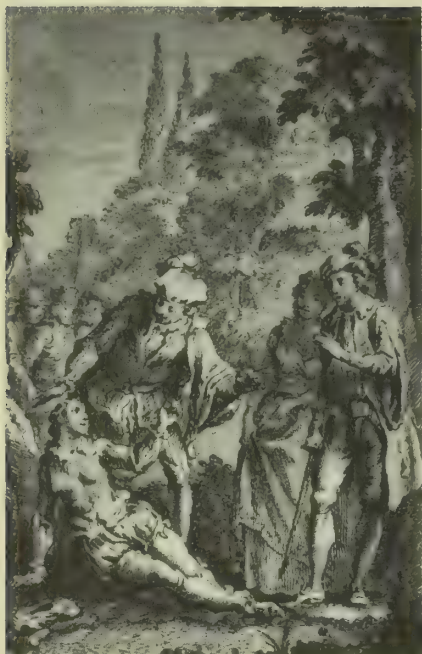


4. 16 "She held my right hand in hers, pressing it lightly; my left was less gently imprisoned." Louvet de Couvray, *Les amours du chevalier de Faublas*. Marg. Gérard/Tillard et Saint-Aubin (§49: 1, frontispiece).

ladies when they ride horseback}.¹⁶ The reverberation of such a theme in illustration confirms both the fixation of a visual image and the constant reprise of literary themes that support it.

Particular plays of Shakespeare also come to mind; and indeed one of Gravelot's English illustrations renders so manifest the femininity of the disguised Julia in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (figure 4. 17) that one must pause to remember that in the text she passes for Proteus's page Sebastian.¹⁷ Still there is quite a difference between this visual paradox, which we have already seen regarding depictions of women soldiers, and the explicit, diegetic *exposure* of the breast as the *means* of revelation: such a plot device, although totally out of place in a play, is not necessarily so in a narrative. Nevertheless, when it occurs, it seems a bit contrived, as in Arnaud Berquin's *L'ermite*, where the hermit discovers in the following way something essential about the suffering "stranger" he has taken charitably into his abode (figure 4. 18):

De tous ses sens bientôt l'étranger perd l'usage;
L'ermite secourable entr'ouvre ses habits;

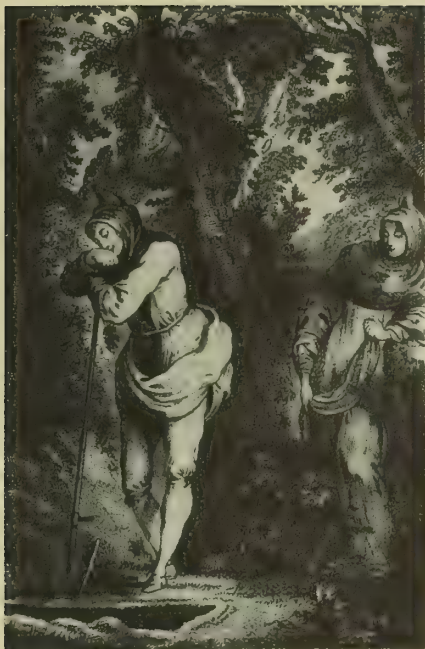


Par un sein palpitant qui se fraye un passage,
D'un sexe déguisé les secrets sont trahis.
(§10: 27)

[The stranger soon loses his senses; the good hermit loosens his garment to help: a pounding breast that surges into the open betrays the secrets of sex disguised.]

Secourable hardly does justice to his excessive zeal, but both characters regain their poetic innocence when the young man for whom she (Zélie) is desperately searching turns out to be none other than—the hermit himself.¹⁸ By this turn the story's sexuality becomes ultimately conjugal in essence, thanks only to a redefinition cast back over the plot in function of its ending. There is a neat, formal parallel here between the means by which Zélie is exposed to the hermit and the delicate way Marillier exposes her to us. The only specific reason why the identities should come to light through this particular process is to underscore that sexuality: sexual identity is fused with identity itself.

As the function of the hermit here suggests, given especially the priestly quality of his robes, such episodes lend themselves well to convent set-



4.17 Shakespeare, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

Gravelot/Van der Gucht (§74: 1).

4.18 Berquin, *L'ermite*.
Marillier/De Ghendt
(§10: 21).

4.19 Dorat, *Lettre du comte de Comminge*.
Eisen/de Longueil
(§26: 40).

tings, where they can complement in varying admixtures the sexual activities often featured in novels both decent and indecent, such as Pierre Sylvain Maréchal's *La femme abbé*.¹⁹ Dorat exploits a famous story attributed to Mme de Tencin in his *Lettre du comte de Comminge*, whose hero, contemplating his own future grave in the Trappist monastery to which he has retired, is in turn being watched by a brother who as it happens will prove to be Adélaïde herself, the very object of the desperate and tragic love which has brought him there (figure 4.19). In this instance where the male is subject to the female's gaze, desire, though implicit, is decidedly muted, the emphasis being rather on their paradoxical similarity of appearance and harmony with nature.

Other notable examples, active and passive, of this theme are Zinebra's story in Boccaccio's *Decameron* and "La Fille garçon" in *Les contemporaines* (thirteenth tale) by Restif de la Bretonne. In the first of these, the heroine, long disguised as Sicurano, bares her breast in order to prove both to the sultan (the husband who had given orders for her to be killed) and to the man who falsely claimed to have seduced her that she really is his long-lost (and innocent) wife (figure 4.20). In the second, Armide des Troches, having fled her family, is serving under the name Champagne as the Mar-



4.20 Boccaccio, *Le Décaméron* (second day, ninth story). Gravelot/Le Mire (§13: 1:279). 4.21 "It's a girl!" Restif de la Bretonne, "La fille garçon." Binet/Berthet (§68: 3:3).

quis's valet when (s)he is accused of familiarities with the Marquise (figure 4.21). This author, always loathe to leave a picture unexplained, provides an exhaustive gloss:

Dans la figure, on voit le marquis de M***, prévenu par deux domestiques jaloux contre le faux Champagne, venir au milieu de la nuit, suivi de deux hommes, pour le faire enlever, et l'envoyer aux îles. A l'instant où le marquis arrive, une lanterne-sourde à la main, dont il dirige le rayon de lumière, le faux Champagne est étendu sur son lit tout habillé, la gorge absolument découverte: le marquis étonné, empêche ses gens d'avancer: "C'est une fille!" (§68: "Sujet de l'estampe de la treizième nouvelle")

[In the figure one can see the Marquis de M***, informed about the false Champagne by two jealous servants, arriving in the middle of the night, followed by two men, to seize him and send him off to the islands. At the moment the Marquis arrives, directing the light from the lantern

in his hand, the false Champagne is stretched out on the bed clothed, his breast fully exposed. The astonished Marquis halts his men: "It's a girl!"]

The chiaroscuro heightening the suspense and revelation of the plot makes a curious dramatic contrast here with *Armide*, whose pose suggests that of a traditional Venus. *Armide*'s name will surely alert Restif's reader to one intertext for the sort of scene depicted, that of Tasso, which helps to clarify what are almost invariably, in the fiction of this period, the strictly heterosexual implications of the transvestitism. Restif underscores this avoidance of any homosexual connotations at the narrative's outset, specifying in the process another intertext:

Je ne prétends pas donner ici l'histoire de quelqu'une de ces Tribades, qui se sont rendues fameuses, en s'habillant et se comportant à la façon des hommes. Quoiqu'elles ne soient pas toutes méprisables, je suis à leur égard du sentiment de Voltaire, qui préfère la douce Agnès Sorel, à la belliqueuse Jeanne d'Arc. (§68: 3:3)

[It is not my intention here to relate the story of one of those Lesbians who became notorious for dressing and acting like men. Although not all of them are despicable, I am of Voltaire's sentiment in this regard, preferring the tender Agnes Sorel to the warlike Joan of Arc.]

Restif, it appears, finds distasteful the lesbian overtones of woman warriors and favors a gentler (*douce*) icon of feminine vulnerability. Although there was, as we have seen, at least on Voltaire's part, a heavy dose of irony in Agnès's *douceur*, it is not surprising to find the literary motifs associated in the same kind of relationship as the images: in both instances the fundamental drives—or erotic curiosity, or however one defines them—are the same.

In a similar manner Marillier illustrates a scene from *Le Caloandre fidèle* at a point where sexuality is about to be—in fact has been—revealed: Caloandre is not *supposed* to know yet that his opposite number is in truth the Duchess of Chrysante, but—typically—he has already taken advantage of her faint to unbutton her vest, so all the same he knows. Accordingly, the engraving makes specifically evident the fact that she is a woman (figure 4.22). This can give Caloandre little pleasure under the circumstances, as his contorted expression conveys, for she is literally dying of love for him and will indeed do so once she has confessed her identity and passion.

I alluded earlier to titillation, which obviously is the name of the game.



4.22 "My dear friend,
what has become of the
courage you were just
urging on me?" Marini,
Le Caloandre fidèle.
Marillier/De Ghendt
(§15: 3:336).

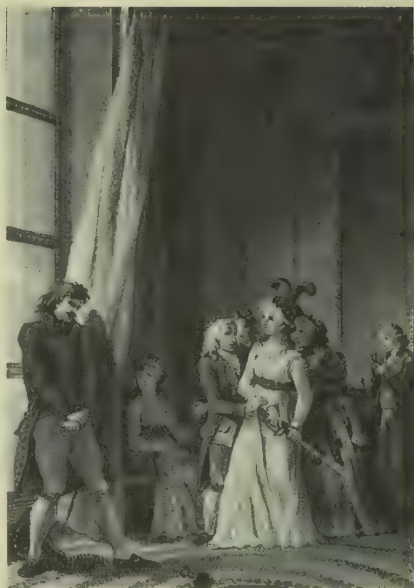
The discovery of sex, the protrusion of a *bouton de rose*, where least expected entails more or less the same psychological mechanisms as any romance except that the sensual drive is suddenly unmasked: *à fleur de peau*, one might say. In another, more literal sense, of course, it *is* disguised; or, rather, it is a play on the whole nature of (and need for) the disguise of desire. Despite the fact that the armored woman brings in other, partially virile and partially provocative, connotations, the function of this structure remains essentially similar, whatever the kind of dress involved. It is a highly graphic version of the permanent sexual challenge of dis-covering, and enjoying the spectacle or consumption of what is under wraps.

The world of illustration in the eighteenth century seems only rarely to offer from the female perspective an equivalent for this visual fascination with the desired other; this probably holds true as well for fiction in general, even though an occasional male character in female guise can be found. Although there is every reason to believe that a not inconsiderable female readership existed, and that it influenced literary production, all kinds of indirect evidence indicate just as clearly that the choices about

what would be published and what would be purchased were made predominantly by men—who in other ways as well, of course, controlled the artistic norms. This, to be sure, is hardly the only area where phallocentrism dictates reference and meaning; it is doubtless among those where the process is in fact the least devious. The material we have to work with, even including the small number of illustrations attributable to women artists, simply does not found any conjecture about the content of the specifically female imagination.

Marguerite Gérard's five illustrations (out of twenty-seven) for Louvet de Couvray's *Les amours du chevalier de Faublas* are a useful but inconclusive test case. The most interesting thing about them is that three, one of which was mentioned earlier (see figure 4.16), depict the chevalier wearing a dress, and a fourth having just removed one and lying in bed (§49: 1:25). The second bears as its caption the encouraging words of M. de Lignolle to Mlle de Brumont ("Bon! bon! ne vous laissez pas..." [That's good, keep it up]) as the latter tries to cheer up his wife by frolicking with her (figure 4.23); it calls attention to his cuckoldry because "Mlle de Brumont" is really the Chevalier de Faublas. In a quite different mood, one that would be potentially quite dramatic were it not for the persistence of this *travestissement*, the same "Mlle de Brumont" displays unfeminine strength in hurling back the insolent captain and is about to betray herself irretrievably by drawing a sword on him (figure 4.24).²⁰ The fifth of Gérard's illustrations (mentioned in Chapter 1), however, underscores his sexual exploits more conventionally, picturing him caught by his father in the dark between two women, with one of whom he indeed has just made love. Moreover, the one that most explicitly draws attention to the hero's bizarre insistence on this means of practicing his promiscuity is by a different artist (figure 4.25). In this outlandish adventure, Faublas is caught in a convent courtyard (where he penetrated in disguise to see his Sophie) in only partial and torn female dress, and here he witnesses from a tree, exactly like the peasant in La Fontaine's *Le villageois qui cherche son veau*, the sport of another couple. Desperate to get out, he nonetheless reveals himself to them in this highly dubious state:

Derneval me regardait de près. D'abord il fut trompé par ma coiffure féminine, par le petit *caraco* blanc; mais le caleçon déchiré attira aussi son attention, et une toile très fine, modelant certaines formes délatrices, lui donna de terribles soupçons. "Est-ce une femme?" s'écria-t-il. D'un coup de main rapide il éclaircit ses doutes; et dès qu'il fut sûr de mon sexe: "Créature amphibie! vous me direz qui vous êtes!" (§49: 2:91)



4.23 "That's good, keep it up; she'll give in." Louvet de Couvray, *Les amours du chevalier de Faublas*. Mlle Gérard/Patas (§49: 3:157). 4.24 "All right, kill him if we must, the scoundrel!" Louvet de Couvray, *Les amours du chevalier de Faublas*. Mlle Gérard/Patas (§49: 4:207).

[Derneval examined me closely. At first he was deceived by my feminine hairdo, by the little white vest; but the torn drawers also attracted his attention, and a very fine cloth, modeling certain revealing shapes, made him terribly suspicious. "Is this a woman?" he cried. With one quick movement of the hand he resolved his doubts; and as soon as he was sure of my sex: "Amphibious creature! you will tell me who you are!"]

Derneval's language seems to point beyond Faublas's immediate embarrassment and raise the question of his sexual ambivalence, perhaps the only such instance in the whole book.

Thus Gérard's plates (usually signed "Mlle Gérard," as if to call attention to her feminine identity), embodying a thematics typical of the overall series of illustrations and one that is consistent with the novel's own obsessions, do not appear to constitute a discrete internal series or even a highly distinctive subset of the whole. There does not seem to be any basis on which we can deduce from them what she thought of or "saw" in the text,

probably because she either was not at leisure to select her own subjects or because it would not have occurred to her to use them for any sort of personal (or generic) statement.²¹

In all visual media the female object exposed to male desire is privileged; there are few concessions to female perspective in the form of indulgent symmetry. The ways one sees and who, formally speaking, can look are matters on which the ambient culture sets restrictions, and this is well evidenced in our subject matter. As John Berger says in his discussion of nudes in painting, "the principal protagonist is never painted. He is the spectator in front of the picture and he is presumed to be a man. Everything is addressed to him" (1972: 54). Despite the fact that the narratives illustrated often allowed fairly generous latitude to a recognition of woman's desire, the modes of sexual attack (male overtures, female resistance or compliance) remain formulaic, and the illustrations themselves seem to retain the constraints prevalent in traditional painting. If a woman were



4.25 "Who are you anyway, you amphibious creature?" Louvet de Couvray, *Les amours du chevalier de Faublas*. Dutertre/Lemire (§49: 2:91).

to be pictured in reverse relation to the male as seen in these examples, approaching, for example, a sleeping or bathing male, the meaning would be quite different, yet without informing us further about the female spectator whether real or imaginary. It would simply reflect (or constitute) what a conventionally construed woman *would be signifying* in such a situation. Would a woman coming upon a “vulnerable” male constitute part of the female erotic imagination? Or does “vulnerability” carry too overdetermined a sexual preponderance—too specifically feminized—to be of any use in such an interpretive context? Within this phallocratic system, women undoubtedly staked out their own æsthetic-erotic existence and were themselves consumers of books; but the female conscience would have had to relate to erotic imagery essentially by espousal or reversal of a male perspective: in other words, in some way other than through direct identification with the *represented* point of view.²²

The body, and more particularly the female body, has always been (at least in the Western world) one of art's most constant subjects. However venerable the tradition, though, nudity is generally rationalized by some kind of at least minimal narrative pretext, such that, rather than just *being there* in order to be looked at, the nude is ostensibly perceived in the act of *doing or being something*; and that something can almost always be located within a finite range of stock myths or situations.

In the eighteenth century boudoir scenes are among the most common motifs allowing for exposure of the body in various stages of undress. In terms of the fiction they themselves spin, such scenes do not force the issue of nakedness so much as pretend merely to represent it as it is found in its natural habitat: that is, the artist appears not to have willfully undressed the model so much as merely drawn her in the scanty *déshabillé* or *peignoir* she was "actually" wearing. Of the many paintings and engravings entitled "Le lever," there seem to be none that include a male except as fully dressed spectator. Dressing-table scenes, conventionally entitled "La toilette," are also frequent (see figure 3.14 from Dubuisson's *Tableau de la volupté* [§30]) and, unlike *levers*, can include male visitors without ostensibly offending modesty. All of these subjects *can* of course include men if they are meant to be quite suggestive, and this is often what one encounters in the works of salty painters like Louis Léopold Boilly. And so, too, of course, "Le coucher": a subject that has the added advantage of figuring the very act of undressing with which the picture fires the imagination; a *coucher* is inherently analogous to a moment in a strip-tease. Diderot's annoyance at the indecency of Pierre Antoine Baudouin's "Le coucher de la mariée" (*Salon de 1767*) was based strictly on the nature of the subject, since in fact the model was in that instance well covered up. A print by Sigmund Freudeberg is typical (figure 5.1), and its legend underscores the "langorous" content:

Les yeux chargés d'une douce langueur,
 Zélie va dans le sein d'un sommeil enchanteur
 Reprendre une beauté nouvelle:
 Songes flatteurs on vous appelle,
 On a livré pour vous aux flammes
 De tendres billets... de la discrétion!
 A-t-elle tort ou bien raison?
 Respectons le secret des dames.

[Her eyes filled with a sweet langour, Zélie from the bosom of an enchanting sleep will draw new radiance: Come, pleasant dreams; for you tender letters have been delivered to the flames. . . Discretion! Is she right or wrong? Ladies' secrets must be kept.]

It is impossible to tell whether this mediocre bit of societal verse was written before or after the image was drawn, but the text is in some sense built into it by the particular attention focused on the crumpled paper before the fire, constituting the explicit hint that the woman expects, or just dreams about, a visitor to her bed. Bedtime is a deliciously ambiguous proposition that is as extensively exploited in the minor artistic genres as

5.1 *Bedtime*, print.
 Freudeberg/Romanet.



in such celebrated fictions as Claude-Prosper Jolyot Cr  billon's *La nuit et le moment* (§17). Because the Freudeberg *coucher* is a print, and doubtless one based on a painting, the subject stares unabashedly at the viewer outside the frame, rendering the enticement to him explicit in a way that literary illustrations never do.

Similarly, there are bathing motifs everywhere in eighteenth-century art; two elegant examples are Johann Anton de Peters's painting *La baigneuse* (Burollet 1980: figure 82) and   tienne Falconet's marble *Baigneuse assise sur un rocher*, the former lightly draped and the latter nude, both at the Mus  e Cognacq-Jay. The usual predilection is for a background of nature, as if to rationalize the figure's erotic presence by a less tendentious and more avowable causality. The artistic pretext thus plays an important sociological role; for there is a great difference between a woman bathing, a subject that intrinsically is sensual only in a very limited way, and the artistic *depiction* of a woman bathing, which is inherently suggestive (there are, after all, many natural acts that are *never* represented in art). Moreover, representation of the bath metonymically links it with other physical and indoor activities, as is suggested by the legend to *Le bain* by Freudeberg (figure 5.2):

De la lettre ou du chocolat
Que pr  f  re Madame? Ah ma ch  re Justine,
J'ai le coeur bien plus d  licat
Plus faible infiniment, h  las! que la poitrine.

[Which, of the letter or the chocolate, does Madame prefer? Ah, dear Justine, my heart is much more sensitive, alas, than my chest.]¹

The tub so resembles a boudoir chair or *causeuse* that, were it not for the title and the clothing and shoes just taken off (thus *signifying* undressing without *representing* it), it would hardly be evident at all that a bath is involved. The poem alludes not to the bath as such but to two other related, implicit referents: lifestyle (the cup of chocolate) and gallantry (the letter).² A small, frisky dog serves to connote eroticism, as it so often does in prints in this style. The representation of woman as engaged in some everyday act such as disrobing or bathing is ostensibly uncontrived—that is, purely denotative—which is a way of disguising her connotative sexuality, desirability, nakedness. Such motifs in painting and prints are stereotyped and thus relatively obvious. In literary illustration, on the other hand, this naturalizing or recuperation of such a subject comes about in large measure by way of the narrative function: a story has far more varied resources at



5.2 *The Bath*, print.
Freudeberg/Romanet,
1774.

its disposal than a short title or ditty; it can create endless (even if still, perforce, repetitive to some degree) permutations of situations, bringing together the right kinds of components. One of the functions of the story line, then, is to bring the reader into a position analogous to that of a voyeur. This is done in many ways that do not specifically lead to voyeurism, at least in the specifically erotic sense: Nemours's spying on the heroine of La Fayette's *La princesse de Clèves* is an indiscretion, an intrusion of a type not uncommon in novels. It is a device for communicating to the character information that he could otherwise not have. But by that same token, it not only lends itself to willfully erotic exploitation, inasmuch as any "private" scene it thereby opened up to inspection from outside; it also typifies the role of the viewer in any scene, literary or pictorial, whose devices of representation allow him to see unseen, to appropriate for his own pleasure a situation that purportedly does not take him into account.

The occasions where a bath serves as a kind of fictive pretext for representation of a nude couple are characteristically situated outdoors, the better to modulate the eroticism of the subject by the conventional innocence of its

natural surroundings. Nature is, to a degree, a thematic counterweight to eroticism and in some sense can be construed as its opposite. Moreover, the outdoor setting obviates the need to “frame” the illustration as architecture does, so as to further the fictive pretense that Nature alone is at work without human contrivance. Often the grotto mitigates the dichotomy, maintaining some or most of the attributes of the indoors. There is an affected modesty in the grotto bathing scene from the Regent’s (Philippe d’Orléans’s) celebrated series for *Daphnis et Chloé* (figure 5.3);³ it is as clear from the narrative as from the illustration that the bath is quite unnecessary except as pretext for exposing the sexual body to view: “Following Dorcon’s funeral, Chloe led Daphnis into the grotto of the nymphs. There she washed her shepherd, and for the first time in Daphnis’s presence she herself bathed, *although her body needed no bath* to heighten the glory of its whiteness and beauty” (italics added). This highly civilized grotto, with its own inscribed corridors and doors, is itself a hedge on the nature theme, affording closed-in intimacy and privacy together with the suggestion of natural grandeur, mystery, and wholesomeness. The viewer of honor is himself represented, clothed and only partially hidden from Chloe; and the nymphs of the statue seem to share with us the privilege of benefiting as well.



5.3 “Daphnis and Chloé bathing in the grotto.” Longus, *Les amours pastorales de Daphnis et de Chloé*. Philippe d’Orléans/Audran (§48: 52).

"Un lieu secret, une grotte écartée" [a secret place, a solitary grotto] figures likewise in Masson de Pezay's *Zélis au bain*. The third canto begins with a series of word plays on the opposition of nudity and clothing, passing via the familiar eighteenth-century mediation of the veil (a metaphor for *pudeur*, and which as drapery is an ambiguous compromise of mystery and revelation), then develops an imaginary strip-tease reminiscent of the wardrobe scene in Rousseau's *Julie*:

Hilas approche, il voit sur la verdure,
De sa Zélis les simples vêtements:
(Hilas voit tout, rien n'échappe aux amants)
"Eh bien, dit-il, voilà donc sa parure?
"Le lin jaloux, ornement de son sein,
"Voilà l'écharpe, et surtout la ceinture
"Qu'elle quitta pour entrer dans son bain."⁴

[Hilas approaches; on the grass he spies his Zélis's simple garments (Hilas sees all: nothing escapes lovers): "So this," he says, "is her adornment? Jealous linen that decks her breast, and there her scarf, and above all the belt she took off to enter the bath."]⁵

He fondles and kisses her garments before himself entering the water in search of her. In this case the heroine has gone bathing alone; the pseudo-pastoral convention for a one-on-one meeting in the bosom of nature is further electrified by the fantasy of nakedness and the liquid eroticism, whose tactile excitement is stressed by Hilas:

Quand ils auront humecté tes cheveux,
Au moins, Zélis, ces flots voluptueux
Se mêleront à mes jalouses larmes.
Crois-moi, Zélis, crois-moi, les flots heureux,
Qui de plus près aurent touché tes charmes,
Seront connus de mes sens amoureux.
(ibid.)

[These venturous waters, Delia! that dare
To clasp you round and dally with your hair,
Will come to me and mingle with my tears;
Believe me, maiden that this favoured stream,
When once your shining loveliness it nears,
Familiar to my amorous eyes will seem.
(Masson de Pezay, trans. Keene, p. 32)]

Along with Zélis's pigeon, the water is intercourse itself, mediating the distance separating them and uniting their senses. Carried away with its own rhetorical movement, the poem literalizes, with the result that the sexual desire passing from her to him (even though she somewhat paradoxically is downcurrent) heats the very water, exactly like an electric current:

Comme les flots autour d'elle s'empresment!
Ces flots si purs, ces flots qui la caressent;
En la quittant, ils doivent te brûler?
(ibid.)

[Behold the waves, as if in passions' stress,
Surrounding her with many a close caress,
See how they come and go
And round her ebb and flow,
And cling around her rosy nakedness.
(Masson de Pezay, trans. Keene, p. 34)]⁶

A storm will make it poetically possible to bring their bodies together; this is the moment the illustrator chooses for his turbulent gesture of passion (figure 5.4):

L'Onde et le Feu se disputent les airs;
Les noirs torrents vomis par les montagnes,
Changent en mer les plaintives campagnes. . . .

Mais, Ciel! les flots la portent dans ses bras!
Dans ses bras nus, il presse Zélis nue.
Tout ce que peut la jeunesse et l'amour,
Hilas le peut, il combat, il s'élance; . . .

Chaque succès pour elle est un hommage.
Une caresse est le prix d'un effort.
Nouveaux baisers et nouvel avantage.
Amour, Amour, nos amants sont au port.
(ibid.)

[Water and Fire vie in the air; black torrents belched forth by the mountains transform the moaning countryside into sea. . . . But Heaven! the waves bear her into his arms! In his naked arms he presses naked Zélis to himself. All the force of youth and love is in Hilas, who struggles and presses forth; . . . every advance is an homage to her. A caress is his

reward for each effort. More kisses and more ground gained. Love, oh Love, our lovers have reached port.] (My translation)

The full flavor of the illustration can be savored only by following a verbal play that, beginning with the overt ecstasy of the flesh (*bras nus*, *Zélis nue*) introduces the suggestion of sexual pulsion ("Tout ce que *peut* la jeunesse et l'amour": *pouvoir* implies *puissance* 'potency' and thus erection and ejaculation: *il s'élance*), to culminate in a series of standard euphemisms from the language of gallantry (*hommage* to the woman who can inspire repeated arousal, arrival *au port* for consummation).

A similar illustration (Eisen) for Dubuisson's *Tableau de la volupté* pictures Belzors towing to shore the unconscious Délie, whom he had deliberately pursued into the water when he saw that she was naked and alone; the current took over from there. Again, the scene is of a piece with the narrative's explicitly erotic continuation:

Elle entr'ouvre un oeil languissant,
Et voit dans ses bras son amant
Dont l'amour va tout entreprendre:
"Ingrat... arrête... que fais-tu?"
Dernier soupir de sa vertu!
Elle se tait et va se rendre.
(§30: 51)

[She opens a languid eye and sees in her arms her lover, whose desire will stop at nothing: "Ingrate... stop... what are you doing?" Virtue's last sigh! She falls silent and is about to surrender.]

There is a different anecdotal twist to this story in that her mother happens along at just this point and forces postponement of that particular piece of the action; those few lines are nonetheless essential in the narrative because this moment has established in the minds of both Délie and Belzors the undeniability of her desire, which, they both realize, must be consummated at the earliest opportunity.⁷

Diane au bain is such a common theme in art that titles on works exploiting it were almost superfluous, though some Dianas can barely if at all be distinguished from the almost equally common *Vénus au bain* or even allegories such as "L'été" in Eisen's illustrations of Ovid.⁸ But by far the episode most commemorated, one that is of particular interest to us in that it represents (and punishes) the viewer within the picture frame, is her unplanned encounter with Acteon. The hunter, poor fellow, means her no harm; but her modesty is so alarmed that she turns him into a stag,



5.4 Masson de Pezay,
Zélis au bain, canto 3.
Eisen/Anon. (§56).

whereupon he is brought down by his own hounds. The precise moment in most depictions corresponds to the first detail of his metamorphosis as described by Ovid, namely the appearance of the antlers Diana fixes upon his head (figures 5.5 and 5.6).⁹ Boucher's rendition, lush in both robes and vegetation, emphasizes Acteon's stealth and the huntresses' consternation as they crouch to hide their shame. The whole point is that Diana in her proud but vulnerable chastity was intruded upon and spied fully exposed, and the antlers doubtless symbolize the phallic threat (now neutralized) that Acteon represents; dramatically speaking, this is the critical point in her vengeance, for it is clear that her intention is to kill him and that he will indeed die as a result of the transformation. As Wendy Steiner has pointed out, such a choice operates within constraints of artistic necessity:

If painting at its best should capture a significant action, it must catch it at its crucial moment, the moment that contains the past and future



5.5 *Diana*, from Ovid's *Métamorphoses*. Boucher/Saint-Aubin (§63: 1:20).

5.6 *Diana and Acteon*, from Ovid's *Métamorphoses*. Zocchi/Gregori (§64: 1:89).

within it. But in this case [metamorphosis] the moment is a transformation, a becoming which in itself is never visible. Thus, either the picture plane must be split into two moments so that its physical unity contradicts its representational disunity . . . ; or the figure must be presented halfway through his change. (Steiner 1982: 159)

In Giuseppe Zocchi's version, Acteon is featured more prominently, being framed in the cavernous mouth of the grotto. Still, if the essential subject were Acteon rather than Diana, he could just as well be depicted as the hounds attack him¹⁰ or as his friends in the hunting party gather for the kill.

To these artists, the point was obviously Diana and not Acteon, a Diana at once passive, as object of view and desire, and unapproachable, even threateningly emasculating. As huntress, she shares these traits in part with the female warrior. Boucher's rendition places her in a pose which could easily have lent itself to an indecent or "uncovered" variant of the plate (a practice mentioned in Chapter 8); one such was indeed executed for *La baigneuse surprise*.¹¹ Thus, in several ways she epitomizes the provocation of the bathing subject, both because she boldly advertises her virginity

(the figure of Diana *constitutes* an allegory of chastity) and, on an ostensibly quite different but complementary level, because she is a man-hater under attack from the (also virile) image of the male hunter: Acteon's intrusion is tantamount to the rape of Diana. "She stood above all for fierce autonomy," notes Marina Warner, "for which her unassailable virginity was the sign" (1981: 202). Thus is also revealed a paradox of artistic representation: to look on the naked Diana is fatal, yet that is exactly the purpose for which the picture exists. The viewer is privileged to enjoy the luxury of sharing Acteon's crime while sheltered from its dreadful consequences.

A curious variant to this image of a ferociously *pudique* Diana is the languorous one who displays herself for Endymion (a shepherd and not a hunter) in Jacques Sébastien Leclerc's illustration to canto 2 of Favre's *Quatre heures de la toilette des dames* (figure 5.7):¹²

Diane sortant des eaux, couchée sous un berceau de myrtes, dans ce voluptueux abandon que donne la fraîcheur du bain. Elle fixe languissamment et avec reproche le berger Endymion qui s'avance et reste en extase à l'aspect de tant de charmes: elle tient déjà dans sa main le myrte qu'elle destine à sa couronne; derrière le berceau, les nymphes de la déesse tournent la tête et sourient en s'enfuyant.

Va, mon courroux s'évanouit,
Et dans mes main est ta couronne.
(§31, "Sujet des estampes")

[Diana leaving the water, lying under a bower of myrtle in a sensual relaxation acquired from a cool bath. She stares languidly, reproachfully at the shepherd Endymion who approaches and halts in ecstasy at the view of such charms; already she holds in her hand the myrtle she has picked for his crown. Beyond the bower, the goddess's nymphs turn aside their heads and smile as they depart.

My angry mood is pacified,
Receive the crown I for thy brow have tied.]¹³

The canto is a sort of hymn to the bath, topped off with love-making:

Heureux cent fois Endymion!
Heureux l'amant fidèle et tendre
Qui voit l'objet de ses liens
Ne quitter les bras du Scamandre
Que pour s'oublier dans les siens!
(§31: 39–40)



5.7 *Endymion and Diana*. Favre, *Quatre heures de la toilette des dames*, chant 2. Leclerc/Legrand (§31: 21). 5.8 Berquin, "Les bergères au bain." Marillier/De Ghendt (§8: 30).

[Endymion shall be blest a hundred-fold,
The tender and true swain, who can behold
His lady leave Scamander's arms, to bless
His own embrace in self-forgetfulness.

(Favre, trans. Keene, 30–31)]

But as the rest of the myth would have it, she also put him to sleep perpetually so she could enjoy him just when she wanted, without the inconvenience that his own independent desire might impose on her, or even of his power to enjoy her enjoyment. This Diana thus illustrates, in context, only half (the sexually receptive one) of the traditional distinction between a standing Diana, clothed, and a reclining Diana nude.

Three different artistic versions of a tale by Berquin yield interesting variations on the theme. The first, accompanying the publication of "Les bergères au bain: Iris et Eglé" in 1775, by Marillier (figure 5.8), is most reminiscent of the Acteon legend both by the presence of the deer and the shepherdesses' obsession with being observed. It corresponds to the

following passage, where Iris and Eglé, while sharing intimate secrets, are alerted to a noise:

Iris. O Nymphes, sauvez-nous!

Eglé. Prenons nos vêtements,
Enfuyons-nous sous cette roche.

L'une et l'autre soudain fuit comme un passereau,
Qu'un vorace épervier poursuit à tire-d'ailes.
Et ce n'était qu'un faon, aussi timide qu'elles,
Qui venait se baigner dans le même ruisseau.
(§8, Idylle 18)

[Iris. Oh save us, Nymphs!

Eglé. Let us get our clothes and hide under this rock.

Each flees like a sparrow pursued by a voracious, diving hawk. But it was only a fawn, as timid as they, coming to bathe in the same stream.]

The striking, elongated poses, the tension (erect, one could almost say) of the deer leaning, counterbalanced by them leaning right, make for muted sexual tension naturalized in lush surroundings.¹⁴ Adapted from Gessner, the same subject was twice illustrated in editions of his works, which suggests that both he and Berquin wrote such tales with illustration in mind. Le Barbier chose to play down the women's fright and above all invite the unseen reader to fantasize on their naked beauty: "Les flots embrassent d'abord leurs genoux arrondis, et bientôt leur sein d'albâtre et de rose" [The water first embraces their rounded knees, and soon thereafter their alabaster and rose breast] (figure 5.9). The women's prominent posture in the foreground belongs to a tradition running from Rubens to Boucher and Fragonard (*Les baigneuses*); here they are counterpoised both in terms of body angle and orientation toward the viewer, as if in parallel with the legend's equal emphasis on the roundness of the leg and the white-red blush of the breast. The third example takes even greater advantage of nakedness, with more emphasis on their fear of being seen, although the subject of that fear is only implicit: they look toward the source of noise that startled them in this dense, jungle-like setting (figure 5.10).

Another of Berquin's *Idylles*, "L'agneau," reveals just how thin after all the bathing pretext can be:

Pour un simple ruban, qui parait sa houlette,
Lyse, un jour, de Tyrcis reçut un bel agneau;
C'était un jour d'été. L'agile bergerette

5.9 "The water first
kisses their rounded
knees, and soon there-
after their alabaster and
rose breast." Gessner,
"Iris et Eglé," *Idylles*.
Le Barbier/de Longueil
(§34: 2:63).



Prend l'agneau dans ses bras, vole vers un ruisseau,
Se dépouille, s'y plonge, et soudain sur la rive,
Parmi joncs touffus, croit entendre du bruit.

Son oeil s'y fixe. Elle pâlit:
Et de ses bras, qu'un froid mortel saisit,
L'agneau glisse, entraîné par l'onde fugitive.
(§8: 30-32)

[In return for a simple ribbon to adorn his staff, Lyse one day received from Tyrcis a fine lamb; it was a summer day. The agile shepherdess took the lamb in her arms and ran to a stream, disrobed and plunged in, when suddenly on the bank among the thick rushes she thought she heard a sound. Her eye fixed to the spot, she paled; and from her arms, gripped in a deathly chill, slipped the lamb, carried off by the fleeting current.]

Only old-style "soft" pornographic movies have weaker pretexts for getting a woman undressed. Actually, the verse itself does not put Tyrcis

literally in the picture at this point other than by the sound he makes; he is “seen” only at the end of the poem, which fully expands, in retrospect, the sexual potential of this initial scene. For he has in the meantime hurried downstream to save the lamb and mark it with his ribbon:

A peine, en le voyant, en croit-elle ses yeux.
 Le ruban le fait reconnaître.
 Mais, ô dieux! si Tyrcis... il était là peut-être;
 Elle s'ajuste de son mieux.
 Tyrcis paraît. Tyrcis avait un air si tendre!
 L'agneau donné deux fois était d'un si grand prix!
 On lui donne un baiser, puis deux, il en eut six:
 On ne les compta plus. Et comment s'en défendre?
 Ceux qu'on eût refusés, il les aurait ravis.
 La belle, prudemment, paya si bien Tyrcis,
 Que le berger n'eut plus rien à prétendre.
 (ibid.)



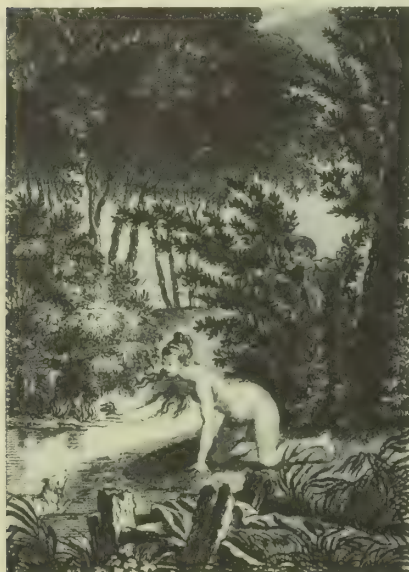
5.10 Gessner, “Iris et Eglé.” Moreau/Le Mire (§35: 1:233).

[Seeing it, she could scarcely believe her eyes. She recognized it by the ribbon. But, oh God, if Tyrcis... perhaps he was there! She fixed herself up as best she could. Tyrcis appeared. Tyrcis seemed so tender! The lamb twice given was so dear! He got a kiss, then two; then six, they lost count. What could she do? Had she refused kisses, he would have stolen them. The girl, advisedly, rewarded Tyrcis so well that he could ask for nothing more.]

The illustration, however, conflates this diachronic development entirely into the voyeur scene at the beginning (figure 5. 11), thereby heightening the importance of his indiscreet presence and rendering the scene's precise position in the text somewhat ambiguous. To be sure, with a change of emphasis the same motif can take on a coloration more seductive than voyeuristic. Like a Siren, a nymph puts Renaldo to sleep (that is, in effect emasculates him) while Armida looks on, in canto 14 of Tasso's *Jérusalem délivrée* (figure 5. 12):

il s'arrête, détache son casque et respire un air délicieux: au milieu s'élève une vague qui tourne et se replie sur elle-même; bientôt il voit flotter une blonde chevelure, puis il aperçoit la tête d'une nymphe, puis enfin un corps, qui semble formé par l'Amour et les Grâces. (§79, canto 14)

5. 11 Berquin, "L'agneau." Marillier/Ponce (§8: 1: 30). 5. 12 Tasso, *Jérusalem délivrée*, canto 14. Moreau/Trière (§79).





5.13 "Fair Arethusa,
whither do you fly?
cries Alpheus; whither
do you fly?" Ovid,
Métamorphoses. Moreau/
Basan (§63: 2:43).

[He stopped, took off his helmet and breathed in the delightful air; in the middle a wave rose, crested and fell; soon he saw golden hair floating on the surface, then the head of a nymph, and finally a body such as Cupid and the Graces might have fashioned.]

Armida's spectatorship here is genuinely passive, since in this instance it is not the male who is stalking the female but she who is (deceptively) offering herself to his gaze.

Moreau's "Alpheus et Arethusa" for book 4 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (§63) much resembles a variant on the Diana conceit, but with the balance of metaphorical power, usually somewhat in doubt in motifs closely associated with Diana herself, shifted toward the masculine menace (figure 5.13).¹⁵ Arethusa is a misanthropic huntress like Diana, but she gets caught when bathing alone (Diana in contrast is protected by her band of fellow huntresses) and is ultimately absorbed into the water kingdom, metamorphosed into a sacred stream. La Fontaine's "Le fleuve Scamandre" and Eisen's illustration resemble a parody of that hoary old myth, since

5. 14 "The stilled waters offered him the naïve image of the sweetest charms." Gessner, "Le bouquet." Moreau/De Ghendt (§36: 1:258).



L'onde devenue tranquille lui offrit l'image
naïve des plus doux attraits

Cimon is only pretending to be the river god in order to seduce the young innocent who is taking a "demi-bain" before his eyes.¹⁶ In comparison with the raw power of "Alpheus et Arethusa," Gessner's "Le bouquet" seems exceedingly gentle, although the link between the bathing motif and the implicit expression of desire is much the same; it is again Moreau who was called upon to illustrate (figure 5. 14). The voice in the text is this time the male's (in Ovid it was Arethusa's), relating his vision of Daphne:

C'est ici qu'avec une grâce charmante elle releva sa robe azurée, et découvrant ses jolis pieds, elle entra dans l'eau limpide. Le corps mollement incliné, elle lavait de la main droite son beau visage, et de l'autre, elle soutenait les pans de sa robe. . . . Tandis qu'elle rêvait ainsi, penchée sur le ruisseau, elle laissa tomber le bouquet qui parait son sein, et le courant de l'onde le porta jusqu'au bord où j'étais assis. Daphné se retira, je saisis le bouquet. (§36, Idylle 43, 213-14)

[At this point, she lifted her azure dress with charming grace, and uncovering her pretty feet, she entered the clear water. With her body leaning gently foreward, she washed her lovely face with her right hand, while with the other she held the folds of her dress. . . . As she was dreaming, bent over the stream, she dropped the bouquet which adorned her breast, and the current bore it to the shore where I was seated. Daphne withdrew; I seized the bouquet.]

In some way Moreau obviously still had in mind his Alpheus, whose function this hero nearly fills. Just as the figure is now veiled, however, the evidence of desire is more muted; and while the virgin is still captured, that fact is symbolically transposed. The illustrator opts, though, for the early part of the passage quoted—before she is “deflowered,” since she still has the bouquet in her bodice.

There are of course biblical versions of this subject (often represented in art by famous masters)—namely Suzanna and the Elders and the bath of Bathsheba. The *Péché de David et Bethsabée* in a 1789 Bible shows a David looking down as Bathsheba disrobes beside a Roman-like (but outdoor) bath.¹⁷ One can compare with this an illustration of a distinctly Bathsheba type by Eisen for La Fontaine’s “Le roi Candaule,” a story taken from Herodotus in which the king who cannot resist taking advantage of his wife’s bath to show off her corporal charms nonetheless expects them to be appreciated aesthetically only (figure 5. 15):

Proposez-vous de voir tout ce corps si charmant,

Comme un beau marbre seulement.

Je veux que vous disiez que l’art, que la pensée,

Que même le souhait ne peut aller plus loin.

(§44: 2:173)

[You must propose, this charming form to view,

As if mere marble, though to nature true;

And I’m convinced you’ll readily declare,

Beyond nor art can reach, nor thought prepare

(La Fontaine, trans. Anon., 2: 182)]

In both cases, the desire thus provoked proves murderous; but here the husband who must be dispensed with for access to her bed is the king himself. Literarily, the most striking aspect of this passage is perhaps the verbal transposition of represented flesh into the stone of sculpture; art, which furnishes the model of the beautiful, is invoked in a turnabout as its refuge: marble both idealizes the wife’s seductiveness and (supposedly)



5. 15 La Fontaine, "Le roi Candaule." Eisen/Anon. (§44: 2:173).

puts it back into the realm of art and therefore beyond attainment. The main composition of this illustration is indeed reminiscent of Rembrandt's *Bathsheba*, but the stark positioning of her leg across the whole front plane is much more arresting, and the explicit representation of the voyeurs, whose angle of view is indeed less privileged than ours, aligns it with the tradition of illustrations which we have been discussing. This is indeed such a common theme in illustration that only a few more examples can be commented upon here.

Inasmuch as such a scene constitutes in essence a temptation to illustrator and viewer alike, the act of representing and viewing replicates the temptation represented *within* the figure by the male eye drawn to the female body; the situation is built upon an inherent structural reinforcement that is only in part evident. It conveys its own impetus toward imaginary extrapolation; thus, the illustration for the second canto of Masson De Pezay's *Zélis au bain* exposes an image of nudity as if projected by the *reader's* desire to see, since in the text it is imagined only (figure 5. 16):



5. 16 Masson de Pezay,
Zélis au bain, canto
2. Eisen/de Longueil
(§56).

Près d'un ruisseau la bergère est placée.
La voyez-vous comme elle est abaissée
Négligemment, pour arrêter cette eau:
Et par degré, quand la Nymphé charmante
Veut incliner son front vers le ruisseau;
Comme les plis de sa robe mouvante,
Modelant sur sa taille élégante,
Aux yeux d'Hilas, qui soupire tout bas,
En marquent bien les contours délicats!

Mais au plaisir d'approcher la Bergère,
Hilas, caché quelques moments, préfère
De voir Zélis dans ce trouble amoureux,
Cet abandon tendre et voluptueux,

Où la Beauté, qui se croit solitaire,
Laisse son coeur se trahir dans ses yeux.
(§56, canto 2)



5.17 "Where are you now, Tiran? Why are you not where you can see and touch what you love most in the world?" Caylus, *Tiran le blanc*. Marillier/Le Villain (§15: 2:52).

[The shepherdess is seated near a stream. See how negligently she is stooped down to catch the water, and how little by little, as the charming nymph tries to lower her face toward the stream, the folds in the undulating dress that model her elegant form put her delicate curves into relief for the eyes of Hilas, who sighs silently. But to the pleasure of approaching Zélis, Hilas who remains a few moments hidden, prefers that of watching her in such amorous excitement, such tender and sensual abandon, when the beauty, thinking she is alone, cannot keep her eyes from giving her heart away.]

Thus Hilas resists—whereas the artist cannot—the temptation to lift the veil by force; correspondingly, it is once more as if the viewing angle had been deliberately shifted in order to privilege *our* access to the body while maintaining the letter of the poem in which Hilas cannot see it.¹⁸ Not that the structure of the situation is thereby really significantly different; what

basically distinguishes one member from another in this family of illustrations is not in fact whether the figure is clothed or not. Here, there is also a play upon the usual ambiguity about sentiment and desire: *laisse(r) son coeur se trahir* sounds as though it should instead read “laisser son *corps* se trahir,” since that is what is really happening; but the lines following also continue to rationalize the role of the heart, as Zélis falls asleep and in her dream confirms her love for Hilas. It is also as an explicit realization of the voyeur’s desire that, in Caylus’s *Tiran le blanc*, a character called Plaisir de la Vie, while preparing princess Carmésine for her bath, extols and displays her charms for the benefit of Tiran, who has been smuggled into her room in a trunk (figure 5. 17). The legend is a provocation to Carmésine: “Où es-tu à présent, Tiran! Pourquoi n’es-tu pas dans un lieu où tu puisses voir et toucher ce que tu aimes le plus au monde?” [Where are you now, Tiran? Why are you not where you can see and touch what you most love in the world?], and a complicit cue to Tiran and the reader, who as usual is the primary target of the visual revelation. In fact, Tiran is there for something more than a front-row seat: the idea is for him to be slipped surreptitiously into her bed; but she, alarmed, makes too much of a fuss, and as a result the consummation is long deferred.

An illustration both drawn and engraved by Moreau accompanies Laborde’s song “Le berger fidèle” on a subject similar to Berquin’s (figure 5. 18). What makes the overall semantic context different is only the reverse twist of the song’s final line:

Dans un bois écarté
 Auprès d’une onde pure,
 Pendant un soir d’été
 De son amour tout occupé
 Colin errait à l’aventure;
 Eglé, Lisette, Iris
 Trésors de la nature
 De mieux nager se disputaient le prix,
 De mieux nager se disputaient le prix.

Se croyant à l’ombre du mystère
 Et loin des regards curieux
 Elles présentaient à ses yeux
 Mille beautés dignes des cieux
 Ainsi la reine de Cythère
 Jadis charmaient les dieux,
 Jadis charmaient les dieux.



Eglé, Lisette, Iris, vous avez mille charmes
Mais j'aime mieux un regard de Cloris

5. 18 "Eglé, Lisette, Iris, you have a thousand charms, but one look from Cloris means more to me." Laborde, "Le berger fidèle." Moreau/Moreau (§40: 1:120).

Le fidèle Colin
Rempli de ses alarmes,
Et d'un regard chagrin,
Ne les voyant qu'avec dédain,
Leur dit les yeux mouillés de larmes,
Eglé, Lisette, Iris,
Vous avez mille charmes,
Mais j'aime mieux un regard de Cloris,
Mais j'aime mieux un regard de Cloris.
(§40: 1:120)

[In an isolated wood near a sparkling stream, during a summer eve, Colin wandered absently, preoccupied by love. Eglé, Lisette, and Iris, treasures of nature, were vying for who was the best swimmer. Thinking they were well protected and far from curious eyes, they allowed him to behold a thousand beauties worthy of heaven. Thus did the queen of

Cythera once charm the gods. The faithful Colin, full of his own cares, and in his sadness viewing them only with disdain, said with tears in his eyes: Eglé, Lisette, Iris, you have a thousand charms, but one look from Cloris means more to me.]

For the genre this poem is a worthy representative: "The song in general, but particularly the erotic song, demands refinement of thought, delicacy of sentiment, pleasantness and grace of images, lightness of style, and great simplicity in its verse."¹⁹ By a clever play of the sort that such poetry accordingly often lives by, Laborde has turned the story around so that the women seem to be offering Colin attractions he does not deign to accept; it is a sentimental, but highly conventional, use of the fidelity motif, which is practically indissociable from the pastoral. Moreau lends the women all the commotion of others who are genuinely threatened; although he places Colin in the shadows like the typically avid voyeur, he captures the ironic contrast of the poem's end via Colin's immobile indifference to the enticements he views. A prankish gloss on such scenes is a painting by Schall called *Les espiègles* in which two boys use a fishline and hook to lift away the clothes that two bathing women have left unattended on the bank.²⁰

Espiègerie, one might say, but ferocious and vengeful, is also at the heart of Boccaccio's tale in which a scholar, duped by Elena into exposing himself to the cold, dupes her in turn, through a fictitious magic rite she is supposedly to execute, into scalding herself naked in the sun atop a tower. Gravelot might have depicted her burning and suffering there, inasmuch as that is really the climax of the story; but instead, in his illustration she has just stripped and dipped herself seven times in the Arno and is heading toward the tower, while the scholar and his servant look on (figure 5. 19). Among the possible reasons for preferring this moment are the difficulty of suggesting such a color-dependent notion as sun-scorched skin in a monochrome engraving, the desirability of representing Elena's attractiveness rather than its demise, and the alluring provocation of a scene incorporating its voyeurs: for even the vengeful scholar, according to the text, cannot help being much aroused by what he beholds:

when she walked right past, so close to him, naked as she was, he gazed at the whiteness of her body penetrating the shadows of the night, and at that moment, as he stared at her breasts and the other parts of her body, thinking how beautiful they were and realizing to himself what was about to happen to them, he felt a twinge of pity for her. Moreover, suddenly attacked by the desires of the flesh which caused a certain part of him which had been resting to stand up straight, he was tempted



5. 19 Boccaccio, *Le Décaméron* (eighth day, seventh tale).
Gravelot/Le Mire (§ 13: 4: 175).

to leave his hiding place, seize her, and fulfill his desires—and caught between pity and lust, he was almost overcome.²¹

Characters and reader are placed by the illustration in coinciding spectator situations not readily paralleled by any other moment in the story.

Only rarely, and then sometimes only in parody, does one encounter a reversal of the usual distribution of sexual roles. In a Moreau plate for Antoine Hamilton's "Le béliet," a tale first published in 1730 in the style of a roman à clef, the surpassingly beautiful Alie sets in her grotto an amorous death trap for all whose fate it is to see her (figure 5.20). But on this occasion she is instead herself spellbound by the sight of the one man she will love and stares at him, framed both by the grotto itself and by the almost symmetric gestures of the companion and hunter facing her, riveted in unavenged and apparently unabashed nudity. Only the text, however, signifies this diegetic ascendancy of the female gaze, which is accompanied by no fundamental restructuring of the traditional pattern of the image. In the case of Ovid's Salmacis, who eschews the huntress image even though it is urged upon her, it is the irresistible nakedness of Hermaphrodite that inspires her to invite him to her bed and, when ignored, to pursue and ultimately envelop him (figure 5.21): "La nymphe Salmacis veut embrasser le jeune Hermaphrodite, qu'elle voit dans le bain" [The nymph Salmacis tries to embrace Hermaphrodite, whom she spies bathing]. Of course this situation is inherently aberrant with respect to usual expectations, as proved by the fact that the mythical episode results in the very name for ambiguous sexual monstrosity.²² Monnet's illustration reflects this hesitation by the masking of any prominent features of sexual identification, so that there is still no original or authentic form of representation of female over male perspective.

As if to show that the canons of representation afford no serious place to the possibility of such inversion, Voltaire twice evoked satirically the notion of female excitement at the sight of the nude male. The first is in *L'ingénu* where, as the Huron standing in the river reasons with his converters over the biblical form of baptism (beginning of chapter 4), Milles de Kerkabon and St. Yves indulge their sexual curiosity: "Mademoiselle de St. Yves . . . disait tout bas à sa compagne: 'Mademoiselle, croyez-vous qu'il reprenne sitôt ses habits?'" [Mademoiselle de St. Yves . . . said in a low voice to her companion, "Mademoiselle, do you think he will soon put his clothes back on?"]²³ (figure 5.22). Here there are two levels of seeing, the first in the foreground, masculine and serious, devoid of sexual connotation; the second in the background, feminine, prurient, and comic.

5.20 "The Goat."
Hamilton. Moreau/
Trière (§38: 2:115).
5.21 "The nymph Sal-
macis tries to embrace
Hermaphrodite, whom
she spies bathing."
Ovid, *Métamorphoses*.
Monnet/Massard (§63:
2:25).
5.22 Voltaire, *L'ingénu*,
chap. 4. Monnet/Deny
(§89: 2).

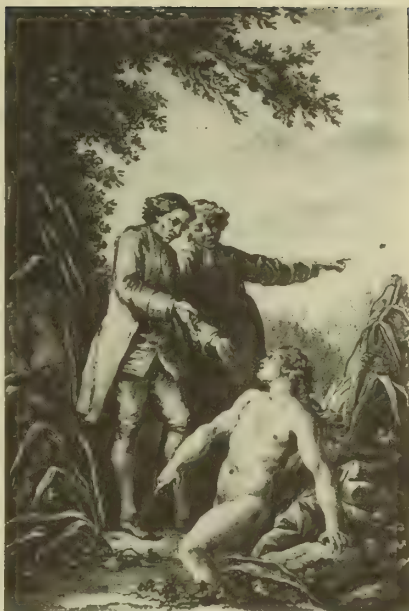


In the other instance, much more sensually forceful, the heretic "English animal" Jenni (*Histoire de Jenni*) attracts Doña Las Nalgas to come spy on him in the bath. The text lavishes attention on his vibrant flesh:

Nous y entrâmes sur la pointe du pied, sans faire aucun bruit, sans parler, sans oser respirer, précisément dans le temps que l'English sortait de l'eau. Son visage n'était pas tourné vers nous; il ôta un petit bonnet sous lequel étaient renoués ses cheveux blonds, qui descendirent en grosses boucles sur la plus belle chute de reins que j'aie vue de ma vie; ses bras, ses cuisses, ses jambes, me parurent d'un charnu, d'un fini, d'une élégance qui approche, à mon gré, l'Apollon du Belvédère de Rome, dont la copie est chez mon oncle le sculpteur.

Dona Boca Vermeja était extasiée de surprise et d'enchantement. J'étais saisie comme elle; je ne pus m'empêcher de dire: *Oh que hermoso muchacho!* Ces paroles, qui m'échappèrent, firent tourner le jeune homme. Ce fut bien pis alors; nous vîmes le visage d'Adonis sur le corps d'un jeune Hercule. (ibid., 495)

[We entered on tiptoe, without a sound, without speaking, without daring to breathe, precisely at the time that the Englishman was coming out of the water. His face was turned toward us; he took off a small cap under which his blond hair was tied, and it fell in large curls over the



most lovely torso I had ever seen; his arms, his thighs, his legs, appeared to me so fleshy and fine, nearly as elegant in my mind as the Apollo of the Belvedere of Rome of which my uncle the sculptor has a copy. Doña Boca Vermeja was in ecstasy with surprise and enchantment. I too was quite arrested; I could not help saying: *Oh que hermoso muchacho!* These words which escaped me caused him to turn his head. Then it was even worse; we saw the face of an Adonis on the body of a young Hercules.]

The illustration captures the very second when his head turns (figure 5.23),²⁴ and attempts to pack as much physical punch as possible into the virile body, lavishly accented with curtains, sheets, and his Sampson-like hair. This sight so overwhelms Boca Vermeja that, when reminded she is after all the inquisitor's mistress, she exclaims, "je trahirais Melchisédech pour ce beau jeune homme" [I would betray Melchizedek for this young man]. And, as Voltaire wryly adds, "Elle n'y manqua pas" [And she did].

Between this bath scene and one for La Morlière's *Angola*, itself a parody of erotic fiction, the family resemblance (along with obvious differences) is notable (figure 5.24). It corresponds to this passage:

Il se glissa le long des charmilles; et s'approchant jusqu'au vitrage, il vit que c'était une femme qui prenait le bain dans ce lieu délicieux. Elle



5.23 Voltaire, *Jenni*, chap. 1. Monnet/Deny (§89: 3:7). 5.24 La Morlière, *Angola*. Eisen/Tardieu (§47).

avait la tête tournée, il ne put distinguer son visage, mais les beautés qui s'offrirent à sa vue servirent à l'en dédommager. . . . Cette personne se leva pour sortir du bain, et acheva de l'embraser, en laissant à découvert des beautés les plus cachées, et que l'eau lui avait dérobé [*sic*] jusques là. En sortant du bain, elle se retourna; et ayant aperçu la tête du prince au travers des vitres, elle fit un grand cri, et gagna précipitamment une alcôve où était un petit lit en niche. (§47: 104)

[He glided along the hedge-row; and coming up to the windows, he saw that it was a woman bathing in this delightful spot. She had her head turned aside, so he could not make out her face, but the beauties offered to his sight made up for that. . . . This person arose to leave the bath, and enflamed him even more by exposing to full view the most hidden beauties, which the water had until then covered. While leaving the bath, she turned around; and perceiving the prince's head through the window, she let out a loud cry, and quickly hid in an alcove where there was a small bed.]

She is shown as she leaps to hide behind the bed curtain. In this instance, in a reversal of the usual practice, the artist by hiding *from us* her distinctively feminine traits positions her in such a way as to guarantee that Angola himself has an unimpeded frontal view. As in the previous example, the text establishes a direct link between the illicit sight and immediate desire, so that the picture connotes as well a direct sexual consequence:

Il tourna précipitamment ses pas du côté de la porte du pavillon, et entra en lui demandant pardon de son indiscretion, *et se proposant d'en commettre de plus grands*. . . . Le prince, emporté par sa passion, parvint *par gradation* aux plaisirs les plus vifs.²⁵ (§47: 104, 107)

[Immediately he directed his steps toward the cottage door and entered, begging pardon for his indiscretion while planning worse ones yet. . . . The prince, carried away by his passion, by stages reached the most acute pleasures.]

An erotic commonplace so unexpectedly recast becomes humorous—not, as Voltaire certainly realizes, because it is any less representative of human nature, but simply because it uses the reader's conventional expectations as a foil for its ironic commentary.

From time to time artistic representation includes a meta-representation of its own process, as in Gabriel de Saint-Aubin's *L'académie particulière*²⁶ and other paintings and engravings in which the artist becomes part of the subject. In *Le paysan perversi* this is precisely what happens, in both text and image—it is impossible to distinguish neatly between them in the case of Restif, because he often so obviously had figures in mind, and detailed their subjects—in the unsigned illustration of the scene where Edmond is privy to the marquise's bath in order to make her nude portrait for the marquis (figure 5.25). The purpose of this project, although executed with the marquise's connivance, is precisely *comparative*: to see which of she or Ursule can claim the superior body.²⁷ Interestingly, however, the illustrator has resorted to both a textual and a visual contrivance in order to capture as much of this meaning as possible. For the scene seems to be, at least in terms of the novel itself, a conflation of two passages in part 4: letter 109 mentioning Edmond's portrait of Ursule, and letter 112, where he draws the Marquise who has already seen the former. Moreover, in order to represent both the voyeur and his subjects, he has invoked the theatrical convention—not at all ordinary in illustration—of the cutaway wall whereby two rooms can be viewed at once by an audience. Restif's image of himself as the unseen observer is obsessively pursued in such works as *Les nuits de Paris* and *Les contemporaines*. Indeed, in one illustration for *Le*



5.25 Restif de la Bretonne, *Le paysan perversi*. Binet/Le Roy (§69: 2:274).

paysan perversi, which appears to represent Parangon's assault on Tiennette in an inn (figure 5.26),²⁸ it even interferes with the fiction. Parangon has entered her room, unbeknownst to her, through a secret door; but in terms of the illustration *Restif himself* appears to have entered as well (or to have already been waiting), even though that would make no literal sense in the story. In this instance the meta-theme of Restif as seer (and vicariously as substitute for the eyes of his reader) takes priority over the ground- or diegetic-level truth of the narrative in its own right.

Voyeurism is in any case structurally inherent in pictures in a way that is unparalleled in narrative. (Fredric Jameson has remarked that "The visual is essentially pornographic, which is to say that it has its end in rapt, mindless fascination.")²⁹ While a text has to be addressed to someone, even if that recipient is unknown or unidentified, the picture most often (with notable exceptions, portraiture in particular) pretends to ignore the viewer who, much like the spectator in the theater, is from the point of view

of its own characters supposed not to exist. In other words, the viewer is typically a voyeur, peeking in from his invulnerable perch outside the book whose characters are always, unbeknownst to them, being indiscreetly watched. There are of course numerous instances in art where the act of spying is itself thematized. In many an illustration the whole interest lies in what is overseen; baths are only one of the possible pretexts. But the possibilities are simply not limitless, or the conventions in any event confine them to a few rather predictable categories. Pastoral traditions are replete with such scenes, which an illustration to La Fontaine's "Contre ceux qui ont le goût difficile" [Against those who are hard to please] typifies (figure 5.27):

La jalouse Amarylle

Songait à son Alcippe, et croyait de ses soins
N'avoir que ses moutons et son chien pour témoins.
Tircis, qui l'aperçut, se glisse entre des saules;
Il entend la bergère adressant ces paroles

5.26 Restif de la Bretonne, *Le paysan perversi*. Binet/Le Roy (§69: 1:139).



Au doux Zéphir, et le priant
De les porter à son amant.

(§46: 1:460)

[Amaryllis, while
She longed for her Alcippus, howsoever deep
In love, thought no one knew except her dog and sheep.
But Thyrsis spied her, as he lurked midst willow trees,
And heard his shepherdess address a gentle breeze
Whose name was Zephyr—heard her pray
That he might blow her lover's way— . . .

(La Fontaine, trans. Duke, p. 25)}

An almost inevitable transferral takes place here, for in a visual medium Tircis can only be depicted as *overseeing*, although he is in fact, more importantly in the fable, *overbearing*. It should be noted that in context this passage is really a *parody* of pastoral, based precisely upon exaggeration of the genre's most patent conventions.³⁰

Another type is the voyeuristic tale so central to Boccaccio and his emulators, of which we have already seen some examples. Such tales of La Fontaine as "Les Rémois" and "La servante justifiée" (figure 5.28)³¹ have a structural spying component, sometimes diegetically accidental and sometimes contrived, which his illustrators frequently emphasize. Indeed, they sometimes push implications of the situation further than the text makes strictly necessary. "Le villageois qui cherche son veau" [The villager looking for his calf] (derived from *Les cent nouvelles nouvelles*) does not explicitly require the key scene to be witnessed visually:

Un villageois ayant perdu son veau,
L'alla chercher dans la forêt prochaine.
Il se plaça sur l'arbre le plus beau,
Pour mieux entendre, et pour voir dans la plaine.
Vient une dame avec un jouvenceau.
Le lieu leur plaît, l'eau leur vient à la bouche:
Et le galant, qui sur l'herbe la couche,
Crie en voyant je ne sais quels appas:
O dieux, que vois-je, et que ne vois-je pas!
Sans dire quoi; car c'étaient lettres closes.
Lors le manant les arrêtant tout coi:
Homme de bien, qui voyez tant de choses,
Voyez-vous point mon veau? dites-le moi.
(§44: 2:53)

[A countryman, one day, his calf had lost,
 And, seeking it, a neighboring forest crossed;
 The tallest tree that in the district grew,
 He climbed to get a more extensive view.
 Just then a lady with her lover came;
 The place was pleasing, both to spark and dame;
 Their mutual wishes, looks and eyes expressed,
 And on the grass the lady was caressed.
 What sights of charms, enchanting to the eyes,
 The gay gallant exclaimed, with fond surprise: —
 Ye gods, what striking beauties now I see!
 No objects names; but spoke with anxious glee.
 The clod, who, on the tree had mounted high,
 And heard at ease the conversation nigh,
 Now cried: — Good man! who see with such delight,
 Pray tell me if my calf be in your sight?
 (La Fontaine, trans. Anon., 2: 53–54)]

The *seeing*, though certainly important, is that of *le galant*, not of the *villageois* who only hears. Yet Eisen, Cochin, and Fragonard all represent the latter stationed only slightly overhead with respect to the couple and

5.27 La Fontaine, “Against those who are hard to please.” Oudry/Cochin (§46: 1:460). 5.28 La Fontaine, “La servante justifiée.” Eisen/Le Mire (§44: 1:47).



thus enjoying quite a good view.³² This would hardly be the case were the *Contes* illustrated with the same literalism that characterizes editions of the *Fables*, and the whole difference lies in the nature of the subjects.³³ We observe here the powerful influence that a work of art exerts on successive treatments of the same subject; nonetheless, we find distinct variances in treatment: whereas Cochin assumes that it suffices to show the woman's *corsage* unlaced, and Fragonard leaves her quite decently clothed, Eisen goes so far as to position the swain in a position to look up under her dress—and thus truly see, as the text implies (“[vous] qui voyez tant de choses”), some significant wonders that the *villageois* does not (figure 5.29).³⁴ Also in the *Contes*, a comparable view from a tree is the subject of the first tale in “La gageure des trois commères.” The illustrator of 1795 is content to portray a fairly passionate version of the embrace designated in the text—

Le maître est à peine sur l'arbre monté,
Que le valet embrasse la maîtresse.
L'époux qui voit comme l'on se caresse
Crie, et descend en grand'hâte aussitôt.
(La Fontaine 1980: 137)

[Soon as the master they above descried,
And that below our pair he sharply eyed,
The butler took the lady in his arms,
And grew at once familiar with her charms;
At sight of this the husband gave a yell:
Made haste to reach the ground, and nearly fell . . .
(La Fontaine, trans. Anon., I.65)]

—whereas Eisen does not hesitate to show Guillot with his pants half-way down (Holloway 1969: no. 38).

A word here, too, about the use of putti to mirror, often by parody but always with some sort of attenuating effect, representations of specifically adult activities. Tailpieces and less frequently headpieces often echo in a lighter vein the slight indecencies committed in other illustrations, thanks to their incongruous (and therefore humorous) combination of presexual bodies with imitations of adult sexual behavior. This convention, which tends to deny the seriousness (that is, the sinfulness) of sex, is pursued systematically in the lavish illustrations of some of Dorat's works such as *Les baisers*.³⁵ In “Les jaloux trompés, imitation de Catulle,” putti are present only as voyeurs, while adult lovers furnish the spectacle (figure 5.30):



5.29 La Fontaine, "Le villageois qui cherche son veau." Eisen/Le Mire (§44: 2:53).

Viens,... au désir laissons-nous emporter.
 Baisons-nous mille fois et mille fois encore,
 Puis... encore mille fois avant de nous quitter;
 Fêtons le jour, l'instant, le lien qui nous rassemble;
 Et confondons si bien tous nos baisers ensemble,
 Que les yeux des jaloux ne puissent les compter.
 (§20: 104)

[Come to my arms! I love you, I adore,
 Let us be borne on passion's tide for ever!
 Kiss me a thousand times; a thousand more,
 And still another thousand, sundering never;

And let us be so proud of Love's sweet bond
 And blend our kisses in a guise so fond
 That Jealousy shall fail to count them ever.
 (Dorat, trans. Keene, 98)]

In fact the putti, rather than characters in the narrative, here symbolize "les yeux des jaloux," which *in the poem* are only an abstraction. With their wings and torch, they are also Amours, but that, too, is an abstraction. Thanks to Dorat's own largesse, no poet of equivalently unassuming talent was illustrated with anything like the lavishness that the best artists and engravers of the period bestowed upon his works; however vapid the verse, he cannot be faulted for his taste in graphic art. An amusing plate accompanying his *Alphonse, ou l'Alcide espagnol, conte très moral* features the same mischievous figures, one of whom is supremely curious to know what is going on behind the bedcurtains (figure 5.31). The story in fact turns on that very mystery, whether anything is happening at all, and if so, who is responsible.³⁶

Not infrequently a humorous use is made in prints of blatantly voyeuristic situations with an implied narrative context, simple though it may be. *Le clystère ou l'indiscret* (figure 5.32)³⁷ has to my knowledge no specific legend or tale associated with it, although it fits into both a comic tradition of apothecary syringes on the stage and a more limited narrative one

5.30 Dorat, *Les baisers*. Eisen/de Launay (§20: 103).





5.31 Dorat, *Alphonse*.
Eisen/de Longueil
(§27: 41).

(see La Fontaine's "Le remède" and Eisen's 1762 illustration, §44). Such a "remedy" has nothing, of course, to do with illness: the servant has been bribed to place the woman supposedly being treated in such a position that her well-exposed and well-contoured behind can be enjoyed through the window in the door. Her acquiescence, and the ambiguous turn of her head, suggest that she is perfectly aware of this operation; the dog adds an ironic commentary with his even better view. In this instance there is, in effect, a "text" that the title alone suffices to elicit. The same could almost be said with respect to Baudouin's "L'épouse indiscrete," where it is clear that one woman, hidden, watches a couple cavorting on what is now very disordered bedding; but the title is needed both to specify who she is and to deliver the ironic moral according to which it is *her* curiosity that is ironically cast as indiscreet (Hervez 1924: 4:176).



5.32 *Le clystère ou l'indiscret*, print. Baudouin/Maleuvre.

Insofar as the female body is being featured in all the examples discussed in this chapter, their essence is nothing more (and nothing less) than the continuation of a long artistic tradition. The delicate medium we are concerned with, however, can in no way approach for richness of

texture and fullness of form the nudes offered by painting and sculpture. What distinguishes them is rather the interplay with narrative. Paintings and statues, too, have intertexts; but they, summoned from the viewer's memory or summarily noted in a title, are limited in their complexity, and the allusion must in consequence be writ boldly. A narrative, on the other hand, can weave a web of connotation, misunderstanding, and permutation against the background of which the engraving can more confidently isolate narrowly chosen incidents. Up to a point, it will still in most cases display the iconographic qualities that will allow certain of its components to stand out symbolically, overdetermined as it were. Thus the process of revelation, the surprise of discovery, in short, the quasi-diachronic, narrative element, functions as a coefficient of the exposed but stylized physical body. That seems to be possible in other media (Diana bathing in painting, for example) only with respect to a small repertory of fables firmly fixed in the viewer's cultural baggage.

The vulnerability—or more blatantly, the availability—of the object of desire, provoked by the apparent provocation of armored defense or the evasion of flight but frequently only implied in these examples, itself becomes the theme of other illustrative paradigms that will be explored in the next two chapters, first in peaceful and then in progressively violent modes. They have in common the powerful appeal, even when expressed humoristically, of transgression combined with indemnity—indemnity in the first instance for the viewer-reader himself, but also sometimes thematized within the story and illustration. The private space of a covetable body is dissolved or penetrated, offering it up for some form of delectation, sublimated or actualized, to an intruder.³⁸ The element of aggression in pleasure, of sadism in desire, always stylized to the point of being more latent than apparent until late in the century, will nonetheless become much more tangible as the motifs we examine move from the tough and virile woman at the beginning of the previous chapter to the receptive or victimized ones in the next.

6 *The Passive Vessel*

Dormeuses

The violation of private space in the form of visual intrusion is a narrative strategy for reconciling decency (or innocence) with gratification; the eyes possess and penetrate, allowing a sublimation of the rape in the heart. In this respect all the voyeurs in the discussion of Diana are like Saint-Preux when he consoles himself for separation from Julie by watching her through a telescope: “ton malheureux amant achève de jouir des derniers plaisirs qu’il goûtera peut-être en ce monde. . . . A travers les airs et les murs il ose en secret pénétrer jusque dans ta chambre” [your unhappy lover has just enjoyed perhaps the last pleasures he will ever know in this world. . . . Through the air and walls he dares in secret to penetrate even your room].¹ He is only looking, but his terminology is highly erotic: *jouir des derniers plaisirs*, however rhetorically morose his use of the expression, is sexually just as tendentious as *pénétrer jusque dans ta chambre*. These implications underlie virtually all uses in both verbal and visual imagery of one person spying on another of the opposite sex. The pane of glass is the metaphorical space between the expression of desire and its fulfillment.

When in addition the person being watched is slumbering, the physical distance between watcher and watched can be ecstatically collapsed, both by the faculty of sight uninhibited by the polite constraints imposed by conscious behavior, and by the observer’s relative freedom to violate the “bubble” of protective space normally reserved around the waking individual. There are remarkable numbers of art works in the eighteenth century, from canvases to the decorations on porcelain and snuffboxes, that portray women sleeping; in painting the paradigm of the motif was Venus with a satyr approaching, realized by Antonio Correggio, Antoine Watteau, Fragonard, and others.² They often merge this subject with a kind

of sentimental motif, associated with dreams,³ as in the print *Le joli dormir* (figure 6.1), accompanied by the following poem:

Puisque d'un cher époux vous regrettez l'absence,
Ce sommeil ne saurait venir d'indifférence,
Sans doute qu'en dormant pour calmer vos soupirs,
Un rêve officieux le rend à vos désirs.
Ah! direz-vous bientôt, je n'ai vu qu'un mensonge,
Mais le plaisir est-il autre chose qu'un songe?

[Since you miss your dear husband, this sleep cannot be born of indifference; in sleeping to quiet your sighs, a legitimate dream doubtless brings him to your desires. Ah, you will soon say, what I saw was but a lie: but is pleasure other than a dream?]

Without this saccharine moralization on the absence of the cherished spouse, whose letter has induced this nostalgic reverie, several other interpretations might be possible. There is nonetheless an implication that it is largely a sensual need that is going unfulfilled: the dream is brought on by the woman's *désirs* and consists of some ambiguous sort of *plaisir*. Woman's sleep consistently suggests sexuality; compare this legend to that of a similar print:

Ne réveillez point cette belle
Marchez doucement, parlez bas;
Epouse encor toute nouvelle
Le repos nourrit ses appas.

Fidèle au dieu de l'hyménée
Elle veut en avoir un fruit
Et ne dort pendant la journée
Qu'afin de mieux veiller la nuit.⁴

[Awaken not the fair lady; walk softly and speak low: sleep nourishes the charms of the yet tender bride. Faithful to the god of marriage, she desires to bear its fruit, and sleeps by day the better to spend the night awake.]

Sleep either provides the occasion for fantasizing about sex, or it signifies, as here, the nocturnal sexual activity from which the body must be restored during the day.

Sleep was a favorite theme of Boucher, with its capacity to signify innocence and arousal at the same time. *Le sommeil interrompu*, at the Metropolitan Museum, is typical: an elegant shepherdess dozes as a young



6.1 *Le joli dormir* [Sweet sleep], print. Jeaurat/Tournay.

man tickles her cheek with a straw. Boucher of course uses many pastoral motifs, and among them this particular convention fit his style perfectly. Many prints were made of his variations on the subject, bearing such titles as *La bergère endormie*, *La dormeuse*, *L'agréable surprise*, *Le repos de la volupté*, *Le sommeil de Vénus*.⁵ There was, as this last title indicates, a latent mythic association with Venus, as well as with the traditional subject of Antiope sleeping while Jupiter looks on lustfully; it is indeed hard to distinguish the two themes.⁶ A similar sort of configuration is called upon to illustrate a tale from Boccaccio about a young oaf who by beholding a sleeping beauty not only falls in love with her but by doing so becomes suddenly more refined (figure 6.2), an outcome that makes it more or less equivalent, by transposal of roles, to La Fontaine's "Comment l'esprit vient aux filles" [How maidens acquire wit]. The text stresses just the right elements for Boucher:

there was a very beautiful young lady sleeping upon the green grass, dressed in clothing so transparent that it concealed almost nothing of her fair flesh and covered from her waist down by a pure white and transparent quilt; at her feet were sleeping two women and a man, all servants of this young lady. . . . He began to examine her features,



6.2 Boccaccio, *Le Décaméron* (fifth day, first tale). Boucher/Aillamet (§13: 3:3).

6.3 Boccaccio, *Il Decamerone* (third day, tenth tale). Boucher/Le Mire (§12: 2:127).

praising her hair, which he thought was made of gold, her face, her nose, her mouth, her neck, her arms, and especially her breasts, yet still undeveloped. (Boccaccio, trans. Musa and Bondanella, 315)

Boucher in effect rejects the meadow and grass in favor of his more congenial sylvan scape, and he eliminates the three servants sleeping near her.⁷ Perhaps in part because it is most difficult to represent an almost transparent veil in a small engraving, Boucher simply exposes the parts of the body that Cimone's gaze most fixes on, dispensing altogether with the quilt over the lower body.

Boucher also captures, again from Boccaccio, the less ingenuous temptations of a holy man (Rustico) beholding the partially unveiled charms of a young virgin (Alibech), underscoring the contrast between her innocence and his lust by the position of his left hand, which seems to be rediscovering his long dormant genitals (figure 6.3). In the story, the gist of this moment is precisely Rustico's reflection on the means by which he

might take advantage of her vulnerability while continuing to make her believe she is serving God; the view of her asleep is indeed the prelude to his disguised sexual assault. As is frequently the case in comic fiction, such aggression is ultimately excused by the emancipation of the female's unanticipated readiness: Alibech will become so zealous in this supposedly spiritual exercise as to quite exhaust Rustico.

One of the reasons for the theme's persistence and effectiveness is of course the passivity of the figure represented, which seems implicitly to invite the viewer's indiscretion if not aggression. The Moreau illustration for "La dormeuse" (figure 6.4) is an unusually striking example. Laborde's song itself appears innocuous enough:

Doux repos, vous réglez
Sur l'aimable Silvie;
Ses yeux sont fermés au jour
Comme son coeur à l'amour.

Peignez-lui s'il se peut
Le malheur de ma vie;
Qu'un instant au moins son coeur
Soit sensible à ma douleur.

Tant de fois, aimables songes,
Vous peignez de doux mensonges;
Hélas, hélas,
Un seul instant,
Consolez le plus tendre amant,
Un seul instant
Consolez le plus tendre amant.
(§40: 1:26)

[Sweet sleep, you reign over the lovely Silvie; her eyes are closed to day as her heart is to love. Make her see if you can my unhappiness; may her heart at least for an instant be sensitive to my suffering. How many times, friendly dreams, have you painted me sweet lies; alas, just one instant, console the tenderest lover.]

Yet in the plate the woman fully extended, well clothed though she is, looks not only inviting but helpless, as if the sleep were unconsciously intended to urge on the male. Further suggestive of this implication are, first, the book on the ground, which could be the romantic novel that has induced a desire-laden sleep; and the statue in the background, a conven-



6.4 "Her eyes are closed to day as her heart is to love." Laborde, "La dormeuse." Moreau/Moreau (§40: 1:26).

tional version of Cupid with his forefinger to his mouth, promising that activities he inspires will remain secret.

Thus Berquin in his *Idylles* celebrates in the figure of the sleeping shepherdess what first appears tantamount to the offering of a defenseless object of desire:

Il s'approche sans bruit. Sur la bouche fleurie
 Que Nise, sans défense, expose à son désir,
 Qu'un baiser serait doux et facile à cueillir!
 Une molle fraîcheur règne dans la prairie;
 L'ombre déjà descend du haut des monts:
 Quels témoins craindrait-il? son chien, et des moutons?
 Tout sollicité, ou sert sa douce envie.⁸

[He approaches silently. On the blooming mouth that Nise exposes defenseless to his desire, how sweet one kiss would be, and easy to pluck! A languid coolness reigns over the prairie; darkness descends from the

hills; what witnesses could he fear? his dog, or sheep? All about him serves or solicits his tender wish.]

The engraving corresponds to this moment of hesitation, which remains ostensibly chaste (figure 6.5). It is the thirsty herd, *haletant*, that assumes responsibility for the expression of physical appetite and has the satisfaction of having its thirst, unlike that of Tyrcis, *désaltéré* ('slaked').

Whether pastoral or contemporary in its accoutrement, the contrived motif of the woman in a wooded area dozing, whom a lover or other admirer chances upon, reappears constantly in the light verse of the period, and its artistic counterpart takes on a life of its own. The plate for the first canto of Masson de Pezay's *Zélis au bain* (figure 6.6), based on the admirer's gesture of delighted surprise at the discovery of Zélis, does not in fact correspond directly to anything in the canto, except vaguely perhaps to this passage about spring with its heavily sexual suggestion:



6.5 Berquin, "Le troupeau désaltérée." Marillier/Ponce (§8: 1:40).



6.6 Masson de Pezay,
La nouvelle Zélis au bain,
canto 1. Eisen/Wismel
(§57).

Si tous les ans un dôme de verdure
Vient ombrager la voûte des bosquets,
C'est pour tromper les regards indiscrets;
C'est que l'amour et la volupté pure
Veulent toujours que leurs biens soient secrets.
Sans les amants, que serviraient l'ombrage
Et le gazon, que, sous l'épais feuillage,
Au doux printemps, font naître les Zéphirs?
L'ombrage est fait pour voiler les plaisirs;
Et le gazon?... L'amour en sait l'usage...
(§57: 28)

[The reason why each year a verdant dome shades the grove's canopy, is to deceive indiscreet eyes; it is because love and pure delights want always to keep their secret. What use would be the shade without lovers, and the grass that the breezes spawn under the thick foliage? Shadow is made to veil pleasures; and grass?... Love knows what it is for...]

The frequency of this subject can be explained only by the situational advantage it provides the poet-voyeur—not, certainly, by any conviction of everyday plausibility. The *reductio* via putti in comparable composition (figure 6.7) evokes playful recognition of its convenient artificiality: like all such counterpoints, it borrows expressions and activities (especially erotic ones) of adults and gets by with stating them openly by projecting them onto sexually neutral infant bodies. No kind of real-life situation is necessarily evoked by such stagings, but in them nature constitutes a conventional *gesture* of verisimilitude that accounts for the fact that the indoor version of the same kind of subject is notably less common.⁹ One encounters all sorts of boudoir scenes, with waking subjects, because a woman could receive visitors or the attentions of serving women at the dressing table or the bath; but she could do neither while asleep.

There are essentially two variants of this general motif. In the first, the woman is the very object of desire whom the aspiring lover had most hoped to chance upon:

Si dans un bocage sombre
Elle cherche un sommeil prompt
Mes baisers tombent sans nombre
Sur l'ivoire de son front...¹⁰

6.7 Masson de Pezay, *La nouvelle Zélis au bain*, canto 1, headpiece. Eisen/de Longueil (§57).



[If in a dark wood she seeks a quick sleep, my kisses fall without number
on her ivory brow]

In the other, she is a stranger the sight of whom immediately inspires passion. Either way she is, of course, always enticing, and all the more so because she is characteristically in a somewhat relaxed state of dress. And, as even Boucher's straw tickling the shepherdess's cheek suggests, the situation generally conveys a pretext for tactile advances. Many poems evoke the accidental combination of sleep with accessory circumstances that enable the viewer in the story to handle the coveted object. Such is one of the scenes from Longus that Philippe d'Orléans chose to illustrate (figure 6.8) for this text:

Un jour que la chaleur du midi avait fait retirer les troupeaux à l'ombre, Chloé s'endormit au son de la flûte de son berger. Daphnis, l'ayant remarquée, cessa de jouer aussitôt, et se mit à contempler avidement tous les charmes de sa maîtresse. . . . Une cigale fuyant le bec d'une hirondelle qui la poursuivait, se précipita dans le sein de Chloé . . . se mit à chanter, comme si elle l'eût remerciée de lui avoir sauvé la vie. Chloé jeta un second cri; Daphnis ne put encore s'empêcher de rire de cette nouvelle aventure, et profitant de l'occasion pour mettre la main dans le sein de son amante, il retira le petit animal qui ne cessa pas de chanter dans la main du berger. (§48: 38)

[One day when the heat of noon had beckoned the flock into the shade, Chloe fell asleep at the sound of her shepherd's flute. Daphnis, seeing this, as soon ceased playing, and began to meditate eagerly on his mistress's charms. . . . A cicada, fleeing the beak of a pursuing swallow, scurried into Chloe's breast . . . began to sing, as if thanking her for saving its life. Chloe let out another cry. Daphnis could not help laughing at this new adventure, and taking advantage of the opportunity to put his hand into his lover's breast, pulled forth the little animal which continued to sing in his hand.]

It is worth noting that, in detail, the engraving is in fact incompatible with the text, since it shows Chloe's bust already completely bared before Daphnis approaches; this lends greater force to his avid contemplation of her charms but in consequence leaves the cricket nowhere to hide. Once again, the illustration conforms to its own motivational structure, which is not necessarily congruent with the text's. The voyeuristic view is in this instance naturally framed, as it were, like a peephole in the forest, a not uncommon format for such subjects.



6.8 “Daphnis watches a cicada awaken Chloe.”

Longus, *Les amours pastorales de Daphnis et de Chloé*. Philippe d'Orléans/Audran (§48: 38).

The Marquise de Senanges appears similarly inviting in the illustration for Dorat's novel *Les sacrifices de l'amour ou lettres de la vicomtesse de Senanges et du chevalier de Versenai* (figure 6.9). After a long resistance, the chevalier finds the way to enter Senange's room at dawn and rests, according to his account, content to savor visually what he has no right to possess. His prose is a virtual call for illustration: “Quel tableau! Madame de Senanges endormie! c'est la peindre que la nommer” [What a picture! Madame de Senanges sleeping! Just to name her is to paint her]. She is once more in a sleeping-Venus posture, and her physical enticements are set off by a remarkable proliferation of lush detail richly texturing the entire scene. Hearing her utter his name, he loses control and falls upon her: the illustration seems to catch the beginning of this motion. The reader, familiar with novelistic convention, would now expect what the character on a different level also expects—which is that she is ripe for the taking, and will be taken. The counterpoint in this instance is that she (being married) is still insistent on her virtue (“la pudeur ne peut la quitter, même pendant le désordre du sommeil”) [modesty cannot abandon her, even in the throes of sleep]) and instead cries out: “Lâche, c'est ainsi que tu m'aimes” [Traiter, is that how you love me?] (§28, letter 70), and he must flee. Ultimately, however, since she becomes the more estimable thereby, she will be freed and they will marry: Dorat thus imitates, in a departure from his predictable poetic works, the growing sentimental tendency in the novel exemplified by the 1760s vogue of novels like Rousseau's and Mme Riccoboni's.

Another example offers a constellation of such favorable and tempting circumstances: the heat of the day, the wood, a little help from the wind—



6.9 Dorat, *Les sacrifices de l'amour*, frontispiece. Marillier/Duclos (§28).

and the venturesome, exploratory hand. Délie, in Dubuisson's *Tableau de la volupté* wanders with amorous thoughts into a “bosquet agréable” to cool off, and the better to do so loosens her dress, before falling asleep:

Délie en ce lieu solitaire,
 Rêvant aux charmes de l'amour,
 Succombant sous le poids du jour,
 Tombe sur un lit de fougère;
 Entr'ouvre un peu le voile étendu sur son sein;
 D'Amours le plus léger essaim
 Vient s'en saisir et le déchire
 Ce n'est qu'en tremblant que Zéphyr
 Ose parcourir tant d'attraits....¹¹

[Délie, in this solitary place, dreaming of love's charms, succumbing to

the heaviness of the day, falls down on a bed of ferns. She opens a bit the veil covering her breast; an ethereal swarm of Cupids seize and rend it; the breeze itself dares pass over such charms only in trembling. . . .]

The Amours of the poem are represented in the illustration as having lifted away this veil as Délie drifts off; at this point Belzors happens along:

Il cueille les fleurs les plus belles,
Les éparpille sur son sein;
Mais les roses les plus nouvelles
Cèdent à celles de son teint;
Il compare avec avantage
Du lys l'innocente couleur;
Le sein dont il n'est que l'image
L'emporte cent fois en blancheur.

Belzors pompe, d'un oeil avide,
Le poison de la volupté;
Et sa main jusqu'ici timide
Se porte avec témérité
Sur les charmes de sa maîtresse;
Le sein de Délie agité
Sous la tendre main qui le presse,
S'élève avec rapidité:
L'amant d'une bouche enflammée,
Accélère encore ses élans....

(§30: 46–48)

[He gathers the fairest flowers and scatters them on her breast; but the newest roses yield to those of her flesh; he compares to her advantage the innocent color of the lily: it is but the image of a breast that far surpasses it in whiteness. Belzors's avid eyes take in the poison of delight; and his hand yet so timid boldly caresses his mistress's charms. Délie's breast stirring under the pressing hand rises quickly: the lover with burning lips further hastens his advances. . . .]

Délie is hardly displeased by this sensation. The poetic pretext is thus a sensual one as well, allowing one to take what has not been accorded, to seduce by the touch and thus bypass the will or at least formal consent. Indeed, the women depicted seldom awaken angry at the liberties taken; most often they are rather grateful instead for what fortuitous circumstances have made possible. There is always the suggestion that they were absorbed in erotic dreams anyway;¹² thus, a situation which so obvi-

ously signifies male desire incorporates a considerable implication of female desire as well.

A similar tale is told in Dorat's "L'abeille justifiée" [The justification of a bee]. The woman is in the conventional sleeping posture, and once again it is implied that she is predisposed to be seduced; the positioning of her left hand in the picture (figure 6. 10),¹³ connoting autoeroticism, is equally explicit in the poem, and the unveiling goes on from there with an insect-pretext reminiscent of the Longus cricket:

J'arrive au bosquet enchanté.
Quel tableau! celle que j'encense
Sommeillait avec volupté
Sous un voile au hasard jeté,
Qui satisfait à la décence
En dessinant la nudité.
Sur l'ivoire d'un bras flexible
Son cou reposait incliné,
Et l'autre bras abandonné
Semblait mollement entraîné
Vers cet asile inaccessible,
Trésor de l'amant fortuné.
Thaïs a des fleurs pour parure:
Les tresses de ses cheveux blonds
Descendent, en plis vagabonds,
Jusques aux noeuds de sa ceinture.
Son sein captif qui se débat
Sous une gaze transparente,
Amoureusement se tourmente
Pour sortir vainqueur du combat,
Et moi, je languis dans l'attente.
Zéphyr alors, soufflant exprès,
Dérange la gaze, l'entr'ouvre;
Au gré de mes soupirs discrets,
Déjà plus d'un lis se découvre.
Voici l'instant de me servir,
Disais-je à l'Amour, je t'implore:
Encore un souffle de Zéphyr,
Et la rose est prête d'éclore.

L'officieux époux de Flore
Brise la chaîne des rubans.

Un seul lui résistait encore,
 Le noeud glisse... Dieux! quels moments!...
 La barrière enfin est rompue;
 Rien ne s'oppose à mon désir;
 Un frais bouton naît à ma vue,
 Et je n'ai plus qu'à le cueillir.

Je brûle, j'avance, je n'ose;
 Je retiens mon souffle amoureux;
 Mais au péril mon coeur s'expose;
 J'ai fait un pas, j'en risque deux.
 J'approche ma bouche, et la rose
 Se colore de nouveaux feux.

(§20: 68–71)

[I enter the enchanted grove. What a picture! she whom I worship was sleeping enraptured under a haphazardly placed veil that answered decency's needs while tracing nudity in the ivory of her soft arm. Her neck rested at an angle, and her other arm falling free seemed vaguely drawn toward the inaccessible asylum that is the fortunate lover's treasure. For

6. 10 "L'abeille justifiée." Dorat, *Les baisers*. Eisen/de Launay (§20: 67).



jewels Thaïs has flowers; the braids of her blond hair fall in meandering folds down to the ribbons tied about her waist. Her captive breast beating under a transparent gauze writhes lovingly to emerge victorious from the battle; and I wait and languish. Zephyr, now intentionally blowing, brushes and opens the veil; happily for my discreet sighs, already the lilies begin to appear. Now is the time for help, I implored Cupid; another breath from Zephyr and the rose will open. Flore's accommodating mate breaks the chain of ribbons. One still resists, the knot slips... Ye gods, what moments!... The barrier is finally broken; nothing more resists my desire; a fresh bud appears to my sight and I have only to pluck it. Burning, I edge forward yet do not dare; I hold my loving breath; but my heart braves the danger, and having taken one step, I risk two. My lips approach, and the rose turns the color of flame.]

Now consciously aroused, Thaïs blames her agreeable sensation on a bee:

C'est donc toi qui me fais souffrir
 Par une piquêre cruelle?
 Tu paieras mon tourment, dit-elle...
 Quoiqu'il soit mêlé de plaisir...
 (§20: 71)

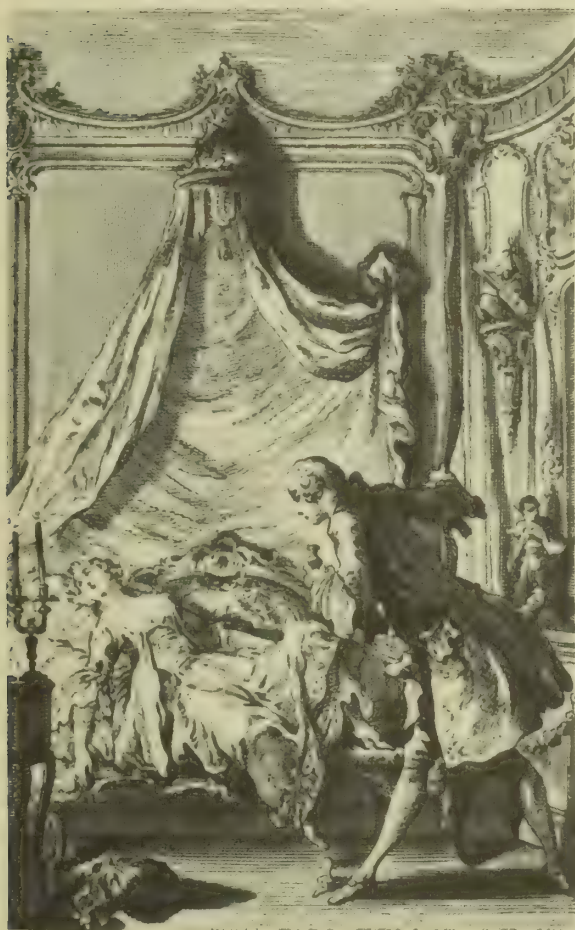
[It was you who made me suffer that cruel sting? You will pay for my pain, she said—although there was some pleasure in it too . . .]

The confession of pleasure is thus linked to the possibility of denying its explicit nature and responsibility for it. The symbolization of the woman as a flower to be plucked is common, but especially so when applied to the woman asleep. These examples are all, pictorially at least, highly decent, usually alluding to the sexual act only through such ambivalent verbal signifiers as *baiser* and *piquêre* in the text; but this poetic/artistic strategy can obviously lend itself to indecency as well.¹⁴

From there to suggesting that the woman is in effect extending an invitation to her observer is but a short step. Of course, one supposes that real women do not often go off to sleep for the purpose of encouraging audacity; the point at issue is not real sleep, however, but a topos that is an artistic and semiotic gesture. Every such representation is *in form* a symbolic rape, but behind that form may lie another contrivance, namely, that of the woman who would rather be presumed upon or taken by force than give herself overtly. Such is the quite explicit subject of a passage in La Morlière's *Angola* illustrated by Eisen (figure 6.11), where Zobéide and Angola are making some torrid advances:

En effet, il allait être heureux; déjà la voix lui manquait, déjà il touchait au but fortuné de tous ses désirs, lorsqu'il s'aperçut que Zobéide paraissait privée de tout sentiment et plongée dans l'évanouissement le plus profond. La tristesse succéda aux plaisirs. Il l'appela plusieurs fois en vain, elle ne donnait aucun signe de vie. Alarmé de son état, et trop peu instruit des usages du monde pour savoir quelle espèce de secours est propre *aux évanouissements des dames*, il lui fit respirer un flacon d'*eau des Carmes*, qui n'opéra pas davantage. Alors, fort embarrassé, après avoir réparé de son mieux les désordres que ces transports avaient causé dans l'ajustement de Zobéide, il tira les cordons des sonnettes. (§47: chap 9)

[He was indeed about to achieve happiness; his voice was beginning to fail and he was almost at the end of all his desires, when he noticed that



6. 11 La Morlière,
Angola. Eisen/Aveline
(§47: 1:112).

Zobéide appeared to have lost all her senses and fallen into the deepest faint. Sadness replaced pleasure. He called several times in vain; she gave no sign of life. Alarmed at her state, and too unlearned in the ways of the world to know the kind of remedy appropriate to women's faints, he had her breathe from a bottle of spirits, which was no better. Greatly embarrassed, he first repaired as best he could the disorder wrought in Zobéide's garments by her excitement, then pulled the bell chord.}]

Eisen depicts Angola fetching spirits and pulling the bell cord (he has ignored the description of her dress as a "deshabillé fort léger" with a "jupe fort courte," pp. 80–81) to help revive a woman who, however, is unconscious for a purpose, as his friend Almaïr later points out with some sarcasm: "Comment peut-on être neuf à ce point-là? Quoi, une jolie femme vous aime, vous le dit tête-à-tête, vous accable de caresses, vous prie de vous en tenir là, *et s'évanouit prudemment*, et vous n'en profitez pas! Que demandez-vous donc de plus?" [How can anyone be so naive? You mean that a pretty woman loves you, tells you so, gives you every encouragement, tells you to stop, and *prudently faints*, and you do nothing at all! What more do you want?] (§47, chap. 10).¹⁵ There is thus a highly ironic intent underlying the apparent drama of the scene, and Zobéide's open position, with her right hand dropped down and her legs slightly spread, is a parody of the usual, more ingenuous sleeping Venus.

It is true that there is another kind of sleep, much less frequently represented, one of satiety: the morning's languid sleep alluding to the *previous* night's thralls. Such is the sleep in Dorat's "Le baiser du matin" [The morning kiss], described lyrically by the awakened and attentive lover:

Tu goûtais un profond repos,
Après une nuit fortunée,
Que nous avions abandonnée
Au dieu des amoureux travaux:
Moi, je veillais: dans mon ivresse,
Je recueillais tes doux soupirs,
Et mes yeux, brûlants de tendresse,
Se reposaient sur la déesse
A qui je dois tous mes plaisirs
Les anneaux de ta chevelure
Flottent au hasard répandus,
Et voilent seuls tes charmes nus,
Dont le désordre est la parure.
Ton front peint la sérénité

Et du bonheur et de la joie;
Sur ton sein ému se déploie
L'incarnat de la volupté: . . .
Ta bouche qu'Amour sut armer
De la grâce la plus touchante,
Plus fraîche que l'aube naissante,
Semble s'ouvrir pour me nommer,
Et tes bras, dont la nonchalance
Se développe mollement,
Quelquefois avec négligence
Sont étendus vers ton amant.

(§20: 107-10)

{I saw your deep repose with joy,
After a happy-omened night
Which we had consecrated quite
To Cupid's amorous employ;
And, watching o'er you, bent to bless
The sighs, whose meaning well I know,
Warm me with hidden tenderness
And kneel to worship and confess
What happiness to you I owe.

The golden ringlets of your hair
Lie floating loose, at hazard thrown,
And their abundance veils alone
The charms that, but for them, were bare:
Upon your brow I see the hush
Of satisfaction's joyous rest,
And, on your softly-heaving breast,
The glow of pleasure's sunset flush . . .

Your mouth, where Love, with pen of flame,
An image of his bow had drawn
In tints as tender as the dawn,
Seems opening to pronounce my name;
And your soft arms, which to my sense
Of passion's instinct gently speak,
Are sometimes stretched in negligence
As if your lover they would seek.

(Dorat, trans. Keene, 102-3)}

The poetic narrator is transposed into the third person for inclusion in the illustration (figure 6.12): the waking person may appear somewhat feminine but corresponds quite well to the lover speaking in the poem (no chambermaid, for example, is mentioned) and, moreover, is quite clearly in bed with her. Eisen has packed into the illustration an enormous amount of the poem's petty detail, considering that it is a mere six centimeters high. Here, since there is nothing to be held back, we have a picture of total abandon and total exposure, the extreme example of the artistic obsession (informally styled "la femme nue couchée passive" by some French academics) so common and so significant in modern painting¹⁶ and typified in both painting and engraving by what I have been calling the sleeping-Venus posture.

An intriguing counterexample is Marillier's frontispiece for *Les amours de Psyché et de Cupidon* of La Fontaine (figure 6.13), where it is the female character who comes upon a sleeping male,¹⁷ a lamp in one hand and a dagger in the other. This description naturally isolates the situation as exceptional in other respects: this is a husband, not a lover, whom Psyche has designs to kill, his divinity notwithstanding. In short, it is hardly an erotic

6.12 Dorat, "Le baiser du matin," headpiece. Eisen/Massard (§20: 107).





6. 13 La Fontaine, *Les amours de Psyché et de Cupidon*. Marillier/Dupecher (§42: 52).

situation, despite their past ecstasies, yet it is depicted in a manner exactly parallel to the sexually aggressive threats previously encountered—with the obviously important difference of role reversal. Unlike the male, who is habitually inspired by such situations to accomplish his designs, Psyche, as the fallen dagger indicates, is disarmed and cannot consummate the act she intends.

At the other extreme, such exposure can be the sign of pure vulnerability. In *Les liaisons dangereuses* Mme de Tourvel's chambermaid is in truth not asleep, but in her lover's room (his spurred boots are at the left), when she is trapped by Valmont (figure 6. 14), who seeks the means of laying hands on the letters Mme de Tourvel keeps in her pocket:

Comme je sentais que plus cette fille serait humiliée, plus j'en disposerais facilement, je ne lui permis de changer ni de situation ni de parure;

et après avoir ordonné à mon valet de m'attendre chez moi, je m'assis à côté d'elle sur le lit qui était fort en désordre, et je commençai ma conversation. Comme j'avais besoin de garder l'empire que la circonstance me donnait sur elle, je conservai un sang-froid qui eût fait honneur à la continence de Scipion, et sans prendre la plus petite liberté avec elle, ce que pourtant sa fraîcheur et l'occasion semblaient lui donner le droit d'espérer, je lui parlai d'affaires aussi tranquillement que j'aurais pu faire avec un procureur. (§41, letter 44)

[As I felt that the more this wench was humiliated, the more easily I should manipulate her, I allowed her neither change of position nor apparel; and after ordering my valet to wait for me in my room, I sat down beside her on the bed, which was quite mussed, and began my conversation. As it was important to maintain the dominance which the situation gave me over her, I kept my coolness so well it would have done the continence of a Scipio proud; and without taking the slightest liberty with her—which, nonetheless, her youth and the opportunity seemed to give her the right to expect—I talked business with her as calmly as I should have with a lawyer.]

If he is not exploiting her sexually, it is only because this is a different sort of power play. She must appear as an eminently sexual creature, but above all helplessly naked, completely without resource in the present circumstance and therefore obligated to negotiate with the intruder. She is correspondingly in a variant of the Venus posture but one that is wakeful and further suggests shame or vulnerability by the gesture of pulling the sheet partially over her. The same is largely true of the scene in letter 96 where he uses the key he has extorted from Cécile herself to enter her room. This time there will be sexual exploitation, but again the emphasis in the text is upon the way he has so trapped her that she cannot even call for help. The moment for illustration is accordingly not their bed scene but his entrance into the room (figure 6. 15):

Après m'être assuré que tout était tranquille dans le château, armé de ma lanterne sourde et dans la toilette que comportait l'heure et qu'exigeait la circonstance, j'ai rendu ma première visite à votre pupille. J'avais tout fait préparer (et cela par elle-même), pour pouvoir entrer sans bruit. Elle était dans son premier sommeil, et dans celui de son âge, de façon que je suis arrivé jusqu'à son lit, sans qu'elle se soit réveillée. (§41, letter 96)

[After assuring myself that all was quiet in the château, armed with my small lamp, and in a dress befitting the hour and required by the circum-



6.14 "I allowed her
neither change of posi-
tion nor apparel."
Laclos, *Les liaisons
dangereuses*. Monnet/
Godefroy (§41: 1:192).

stances, I paid my first visit to your pupil. I had had everything made ready (and at that by herself) so that I could enter without a sound. She was in her first sleep, that of her age, so I reached her bedside before she had awaked.]

This original variant on the sleeping posture helps confer on Cécile an innocent and childlike appearance. Very much the same kind of situation carries over into the sleeping victims of *romans noirs*, where an exposed breast seems essential to a particular combination of erotic and melodramatic effect. For example:

Déjà Cromwell est auprès d'elle; d'une main il tient la lampe qui doit éclairer son forfait, de l'autre il élève sur le sein de la jeune Ecosaise le fer dont il veut la percer; mais avant de lui porter le coup mortel, il



6. 15 Laclos, *Les liaisons dangereuses*. Gérard/Masquelier (§41: 2:28).

trouve un plaisir barbare à la contempler. Sa jeunesse, ses charmes, cet abandon touchant qui la rend encore plus belle, cette pâleur qui donne un nouvel intérêt à sa figure angélique, ne font qu'irriter la fureur de son ennemi.¹⁸

[Already Cromwell was in her room; with one hand he held the lamp to light his crime, with the other he raised over the young Scotswoman the knife he would stab her with; but before striking the fatal blow, he took pleasure in contemplating her. Her youth, her charms, a touching abandon that made her fairer still, the paleness that heightened the attraction of her angelic face, only served to stir her enemy's rage.]

By transforming a pastoral nicety into open aggression, such an illustration points up the latent ferocity of desire in the tamer versions, and more important still its link to a fantasy of life-or-death power to deprive the desired object of the ability to resist.

Another way of expressing that aggression and total masculine control is the physical capturing which in eighteenth-century English, significantly for this theme, was still called *rape*. Already in the seventeenth century classical *enlèvements* were a favorite subject for sculpture; such was the motif's popularity with artists and their patrons that there was, as Pierre Francastel reports, a project for *quatre enlèvements* for the gardens of Versailles:

La forme de l'Enlèvement avait déjà fourni à la statuaire l'occasion de quelques morceaux illustres, rendus extrêmement familiers aux artistes, par la multiplication des réductions de bronze, conservées dans les Cabinets. . . . En particulier, l'Enlèvement de Proserpine était en passe de devenir, depuis vingt-cinq années, un sujet vraiment classique; Jules Romain, Poussin, Rubens l'ont peint ou dessiné avant La Fosse qui, presque en même temps, en 1672, l'avait choisi pour sujet de son morceau de réception à l'Académie. (Francastel 1930: 131–32)

[The subject of Rape had already furnished statuary with some famous pieces, which had become extremely familiar to artists thanks to the proliferation of bronze reductions kept in collections. . . . In particular, the Rape of Proserpine had practically for twenty-five years been a genuinely classical subject; Jules Romain, Poussin, Rubens painted or drew it before La Fosse who, at almost the same time, chose it in 1672 for his reception masterpiece at the Academy.]

Given this artistic proliferation, it is often difficult to tell which rape is intended in a given work, and several of the bronzes at the Louvre of the type mentioned by Francastel are uncertainly labeled.¹⁹

Everything in this chapter has to do with rape, in one way or another. Not that these illustrations constitute even in the aggregate a reflection, in any serious sense, on the fundamental notion of human violation; but that limitation seems to me inherent in the material under study. It was all but excluded that any visual medium other than tragic “historical” painting—and then only within strict limits, usually requiring attenuation—should deal at all directly with that subject. Any untransposed, representational treatment of rape as such would be out of the question in a legally produced book. Therefore it is usually suggested only in contexts that render it either mythic (and here the archetype seems to be certain episodes of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*), or comic, as quintessentially seen in Voltaire's *Pucelle d'Orléans*. Ovid is the ultimate collateral for such a tendentious topic. Because rape

confronts one so starkly with both masculine arrogance (*phallocratie*) and violence, it is unseemly, visually unmentionable; but such a venerable source as Ovid, covering it with both antique prestige and some degree of metamorphic disguise, authorizes a certain artistic boldness. One does not represent *rape* literally—in human terms—but one can represent *Ovid* literally: the result, larger than “life,” will necessarily be seen as at most a figuration. Comedy works in a different direction, either trivializing its treatment of the subject or ironizing its context; Voltaire was not unique in his approach, but his is a particularly intriguing insistence, and no one should deny its really considerable force.

This tradition was long-lived, to say the least, although it was perhaps not always celebrated in so systematic a fashion as in the Versailles project. Louis Jean François Lagrenée in 1755 painted an *Enlèvement de Déjanire* [Rape of Deianira] as his reception piece for the Académie;²⁰ the same



6.16 Nessus and Deianira, from Ovid's *Métamorphoses*. Zocchi/Gregori (§64: 2:47).



6.17 Rape of the Sabines (?), from Ovid's *Métamorphoses*. Zocchi/Gregori (§64: 2: 249). 6.18 "Jupiter, changed into a bull, ravished Europa to the Island of Crete." Ovid, *Métamorphoses*. Boucher/Augustin de Saint-Aubin (§63: 1: 165).

subject was illustrated in a 1767 edition of the *Metamorphoses* by Zocchi (figure 6.16). In Ovid this scene is more detailed in its dialogue than in its description: Hercules, fearful of crossing the river with his bride, relies upon Nessus to carry her over; but as Hercules reaches the other bank, he hears Deianira cry out and sees that "Nessus was about to abuse the object confided to his care."²¹ Exactly how a centaur would have gone about that is not clear from the engraving, but then such difficulties did not bother the Greeks and Romans much either; the intention, and even then no more than suggested, is quite enough for the artist, whose explicit subject is *enlèvement* and not rape. The important thing, of course, is the multiplication in this legend of cross-currents between male and female, virgin and fiend, man and beast, god and mortal; and the fact that Deianira is so beautiful that, like most mythic heroines, neither mortals nor immortals can resist her charms or even keep their hands off her. In another illustration the same artists represent what is apparently the rape of the Sabines (figure 6.17), although that episode really comes from Livy and is alluded to only in the very faintest way by Ovid: here we must conclude that the text had nothing specific to do with the illustration but that an artistic tradition

did, since it clearly owes a good deal to Nicolas Poussin's version of the subject. There are plenty of other *enlèvements*, and they could be modulated to any combination of violence and elegance. There are *Enlèvements d'Europe* in abundance, the best known of which are Boucher's, which hardly depict the victim as screaming and distraught. Consider, among them, his plate for Ovid (figure 6. 18). A happy conjunction of motifs and proclivities overdetermine this subject. Ovid's own description (book 2) is plastic and replete with topoi familiar to Boucher (indeed, Ovid is himself thought to have been inspired by a painting): the elegant, muscular, and gentle white bull, the garlands, the admixture of land and water bringing into play a bathing motif, Europa's company of virgins from Tyre; these are all present. What Boucher has distinctly, and idiosyncratically, added in particular is the several Cupids (who help emphasize the gentler aspects of this story, which he indeed represents as more of a seduction than a rape), and the reminder in the sky that the bull is after all the master of thunder and lightning. Needless to say, Boucher packs much more such detail into his large paintings, with which this plate shares the characteristically studied composition, but it is mostly just multiplication of the same elements. The whiteness of the bull is much stressed in Ovid and in Boucher's paintings, but engraving can do little with whiteness; this same technical limitation has its importance, already mentioned, in the depiction of feminine beauty. In order to make the bull appear sensual without introducing a more evident element of violence into the scene, Boucher depicts him as soft and friendly, like a contented cow.

The *enlèvement* of Venus by Vulcan in the first canto of Montesquieu's *Le temple de Gnide* as represented by Jean-François Peyron (figure 6. 19) is just as serene and more pompous, allied to the rape theme only by the use of that pregnant word *enlever* and, of course, the sexual designs implied. The veil swirling in a circular pattern is once more the sign of violence, but it is not reinforced by any other forceful suggestion of motion; it all appears more like a procession, were it not for Mars's gesturing in the otherwise serene background of spectators. Particularly interesting to us in this context is the fact that the illustration constitutes a rendition not of an event related in *Le temple de Gnide* but of a painting in the temple:

Il y a un appartement séparé, où le peintre a représenté les noces de Vénus et de Vulcain. . . .

Dans un autre tableau, on voit Junon qui fait la cérémonie du mariage. Vénus prend la coupe, pour jurer à Vulcain une fidélité éternelle: les dieux sourient; et Vulcain l'écoute avec plaisir.

De l'autre côté, on voit le dieu impatient, qui entraîne sa divine



6.19 "Vulcan takes Venus off to the nuptial bed." Montesquieu, *Le temple de Gnide*, canto 1. Peyron/Née (§59: 5:425).

épouse; elle fait tant de résistance, que l'on croirait que c'est la fille de Cérès que Pluton va ravir, si l'oeil qui voit Vénus pouvait jamais se tromper.

Plus loin de là, on le voit qui l'enlève, pour l'emporter sur le lit nuptial. Les dieux suivent en foule. La déesse se débat, et veut échapper des bras qui la tiennent. Sa robe fuit ses genoux, la toile vole: mais Vulcain répare ce beau désordre, plus attentif à la cacher qu'ardent à la ravir.

Enfin, on le voit qui vient de la poser sur le lit que l'Hymen a préparé: il l'enferme dans les rideaux; et il croit l'y tenir pour jamais. (§59, canto 1)

[There was a separate apartment, where the painter had depicted the marriage of Venus and Vulcan. . . . In another painting, Juno was performing the marriage ceremony. Venus takes the cup to swear eternal faithfulness to Vulcan: the gods smile; Vulcan listens with pleasure. On the opposite side, the impatient god is leading away his divine spouse;

she is putting up so much resistance that you would think she was the daughter of Ceres being raped by Pluto, if the eye that sees Venus could ever be mistaken. Further along, he is carrying her off to the nuptial bed. The gods are following in a band. The goddess is struggling and trying to escape from the arms that hold her. Her dress exposes her knees, the cloth billows up; but Vulcan repairs this pretty disorder, more concerned to hide her than eager to ravish her. Finally, he has just placed her on the bed prepared by Hymen; he closes the curtains over her, and thinks he can keep her there for ever.]

This describes a whole series of five nuptial tableaux of which Peyron's plate represents the fourth.²² Moreover, we can now see that it is linked to the more violent senses of abduction by the one preceding it, which alludes to the rape of Proserpine. There is in addition a subtext, suggested in the second and fifth subjects as well as the engraving, namely, the eventual infidelity of Venus with Mars.

There are of course numerous legends of women being transformed into rivers, trees, and other things as their only escape from rape; La Fontaine's "Le fleuve Scamandre" is based on one of these.²³ Even newer literary inspirations, however, continue to dwell on the theme. Novels of all categories abound in *enlèvements* in both senses of the word: elopements of desperate young lovers, on the one hand, and, on the other, the forceful abduction of vulnerable girls, from Angélique in Paul Scarron's *Le roman comique* (1651–1657) to the woeful victims in Sade. Lighter fictions too, and ones perhaps more likely to be illustrated, also furnish numerous examples. Dorat's "Les trois frères," also called "Les dévirgineurs," consists of a quaint twist given to what is at bottom a rather unsavory situation. The couple at right in the illustration (figure 6.20) are not lovers but simply acquaintances; he is escorting her for her protection when they are accosted by the three brothers who pride themselves on claiming all the maidenheads in the region. In her own interests, Colin swears she is not a virgin but his wife; in consequence whereof, threatened with death if he fails to demonstrate his marital prerogatives on the spot, he duly performs (she suggests he only pretend, but he responds that that would be too dangerous). Besides, Colin obtains permission to marry her afterward so all is well. The story's cuteness is thus a matter of tone and context: obviously, the couple is forced into doing what they want to do anyway and do not suffer. The artist, consistent with the usual practice, has chosen the most innocuous moment in this sequence, when the girl is made to alight from the ass: a moment that indicates coercion but does not allude to sex. In a tale by Caylus, Migno-



6.20 Dorat, "Les trois frères." Eisen/de Longueil (§26: 2:122).

nette is abducted by the giant Chicottin for having disobeyed her fairy protectrice (figure 6.21): "Les cris de Mignonette ne le purent attendrir et ce fut alors qu'elle se repentit d'avoir été désobéissante" [He yielded not to Mignonette's cries, and it was then that she regretted her disobedience]. The prince Pinçon is powerless to help her, but the fairy will reappear in time to set things aright.²⁴

The illustration for Hamilton's *Zénéide* (figure 6.22), a sort of fairy-historical tale of old France, refers to a minor episode concerning the life of Alboflède (Mélusine). Warned by her father to eschew lovers under the threat that any sexual contact will instantly transform her exceptional beauty into ugliness, she flees all; but one day a bath proves her undoing:

De mille charmes qui brillèrent dans sa personne, le moindre était celui de ses cheveux; ils étaient pourtant de la plus belle couleur du monde, si



6.21 "He yielded not to Mignonette's cries, and it was then that she regretted her disobedience." Caylus, *Mignonette*. Marillier/De Ghendt (§53: no. 72).

longs et si épais, qu'ils la couvraient entièrement quand elle voulait. Un jour qu'elle les peignait au bord d'une rivière où elle s'était baignée, un cerf plus blanc que la neige, poursuivi par des chasseurs, se lança dans l'eau; et, pendant que ceux qui le poursuivaient cherchaient un gué, il passa la rivière à la nage, et se vint doucement coucher auprès d'elle. Il paraissait n'en pouvoir plus de lassitude, et semblait lui demander sa protection par des regards tristes et languissants. (§38: 2:435)

[Of the thousand charms that shone in her person, the least was her hair; yet it was of the most beautiful color, so long and thick that it covered her entirely when she wished. One day while she was combing it at a river's edge where she had bathed, a stag whiter than snow, pursued by hunters, plunged into the water; and while the pursuers were looking for a place to ford, he swam across and came to lie down beside her. He appeared exhausted and unable to go on, and seemed with his sad and languishing eyes to be asking her protection.]

Up to this point, and as far as the engraving is concerned, there are no

overtones of any kind of violence except that to which the stag is himself subjected. But the story continues:

Jamais rien ne lui avait paru si beau, ni si digne de compassion; elle mit la main dessus pour le caresser et le consoler: mais elle ne l'eut pas plutôt touché, qu'elle le vit changer en homme. Sa surprise ne dura qu'un moment; car, dans le péril qui la menaçait, elle eut recours au moyen infallible qu'elle crut avoir pour s'en garantir. Elle était presque nue; et, la pudeur ajoutant une nouvelle vitesse à sa légèreté ordinaire, elle volait au lieu de courir; mais on eût dit que cet amant téméraire, à qui l'Amour venait de prêter ses ailes les plus rapides, avait encore retenu sa qualité de cerf.... (§38: 2:435–36)

[Nothing had ever appeared so beautiful to her, nor so worthy of compassion. She placed her hand on him to caress and console him; but she had no sooner touched him than she saw him change into a man. Her surprise lasted but a minute; for in the peril that threatened her, she had recourse to what she thought was an infallible means of protection.



6.22 Hamilton,
Zénétyde. Moreau/De
Ghendt (§38: 2:399).

She was almost naked; and modesty adding new speed to her ordinary lightness, she did not run but flew; but one would have thought that Cupid had lent the bold lover his swiftest wings, and that he still was as a stag. . . .]

Amour is simply avenging her disdain of lovers: during the pursuit, her hair will get caught like Absalom's in a thicket, at which time the pursuer can—and does—rape her. This elicits an additional narrative commentary whose irony conditions the overall subject:

Je ne vous dirai point que les mauvais plaisants du temps disaient, en contant cette histoire, qu'elle ne s'était point trop désespérée après son aventure, et que le malheur ne lui parut pas si grand qu'on ne s'en pût consoler, s'il ne lui en avait pas coûté ses appas; mais, après cette perte, la vie lui devint odieuse. (§38: 2:437)

[I will not tell you that the wags of the time said, when telling her story, that she did not overly despair after her adventure, and that the misfortune did not appear so great as to leave her inconsolable, if it had not cost her her beauty: but once that was lost, life to her was a torture.]

Now really she only *believes* her beauty is lost; therefore, by overcompensation for this imagined damage, she manages to turn herself truly ugly. This additional irony only underscores the text's insidious (and indirect) conclusion regarding her ambivalence, suggesting that rape is not such a distasteful thing at all; that, if it puts an abrupt end to feminine prudery and resistance, the victim will in reality be grateful. The ultimate significance of the illustration has been attenuated by a process paralleling the withdrawal from the story itself of the tragic implications of violence.

In the first of the near-rapes to which Voltaire's Pucelle is subjected, she is put to sleep by a secret conjuration of the god Morpheus (who presides over the scene with a yawn) in order that Grisbourdon, a Franciscan, might conveniently share her with the mule-driver of Domremy (figure 6.23):²⁵

Nos deux galants, pendant ce doux sommeil,
Aiguillonnés du démon du réveil,
Avaient de Jeanne ôté la couverture.
Déjà trois dés roulant sur son beau sein,
Vont décider au jeu de saint Guilain
Lequel des deux doit tenter l'aventure.
Le moine gagne, un sorcier est heureux!
Le Grisbourdon se saisit des enjeux,

Il fond sur Jeanne. O soudaine merveille!

Denis arrive, et Jeanne se réveille.

(Voltaire 1970: 283–84)

[During this heavy sleep our gallant twain,
Spurred by their waking thoughts, could not refrain,
But tore from Joan the covering in a trice,
Already on her bosom rolled three dice,
Whose numbers were to seal, at one dread cast,
Who should the first attack, and who the last;
The monk proved victor, for magicians thrive,
Roch Grisbourdon, to his desires alive,
Seized and embraced poor Joan—oh, wondrous sight,
Denis arrived and Joan woke in a fright.

(Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 40: 73)]

6.23 “The monk proved victor, for magicians thrive, / Roch Grisbourdon, to his desires alive, / Seized and embraced poor Joan”
Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 2.
Moreau/Dambrun (§85).



The wonder is that just at this moment Saint Denis will descend to reveal to Jeanne her sacred mission; and in function of this deliverance, the jug beside the bed though overturned is neither broken nor spilling its contents. While the illustration obviously concerns the exposure of Jeanne's vulnerability as sexual object, rotated as she is from the conventional sleeping position seen earlier in order to present her lower body in the foreground, there is an exquisite hesitation between explicitness and semiotic finesse, one that is specifically embodied in an optional stroke of the burin: some versions of this plate (as this one) include this stylized suggestion of genitalia and others do not; such deft but significant changes were easily made at any time in copper plates. The cautious ones simply respect, despite the slight indecency of the subject, the classical artistic convention according to which the female nude has nothing between her legs.

In chapter eleven of *Candide*, where the old woman is telling her story, Voltaire, who does not shrink from irony about anything connected with this subject, nonetheless in this instance evokes only horror at the violence it represents:

On combattit avec la fureur des lions, des tigres et des serpents de la contrée, pour savoir à qui nous aurait. Un Maure saisit ma mère par le bras droit, le lieutenant de mon capitaine la retint par le bras gauche; un soldat maure la prit par une jambe, un de nos pirates la tenait par l'autre. Nos filles se trouvèrent presque toutes en un moment tirées ainsi à quatre soldats. . . . Enfin je vis toutes nos Italiennes et ma mère déchirées, coupées, massacrées par les monstres qui se les disputaient.

[They fought with the fury of the lions, tigers, and serpents of their country, to know who would have us. A Moor seized my mother by the right arm, while my captain's lieutenant held her by the left; another Moor laid hold of her by the right leg, and one of our coursairs held her by the other. In this manner were almost every one of our women tugged between four soldiers. . . . At length I saw all our Italian women and my mother mangled and torn in pieces by the monsters who contended for them.]²⁶

The Monnet illustration (figure 6.24) largely respects this emphasis, without paying too keen attention to the specific details such as who is pulling which arm or leg; in fact the composition, by leaving her whole torso and leg to our view, fails to station an attacker on the side from which her legs would have to be seized. Like the old woman herself, it draws attention to physical charms, yet without ironizing over the imaginary seriousness



6.24 Voltaire, *Candide*,
chap. 11. Monnet/Deny
(§89: 2:102).

of consequences, although there is little anguish evident in her face. It all the same retains a fairly classical pose, privileging dignity over distress and expressing violence through a classical symmetry of countervailing forces.

In contrast, there is a large dose of irony in the mock-rape scene in Voltaire's *L'ingénu*, which the same artists render just at the point where the heroine is rescued (figure 6.25): "Mademoiselle de St. Yves, se réveillant en sursaut s'était écriée: 'Quoi! c'est vous! ah! c'est vous! arrêtez-vous, que faites-vous?' Il avait répondu: 'Je vous épouse,' et en effet il l'épousait, si elle ne s'était débattue avec toute l'honnêteté d'une personne qui a de l'éducation" [Mademoiselle de Saint-Yves, waking with a start, cried out: "What, it's you? Ah! it's you. Stop that; what are you doing?" He answered: "I am marrying you," and indeed he would have married her, if she had not defended herself with all the decency of a person of education] (chapter 6). The figure, like the text, seems gently to parody her *pudeur*—



6.25 Voltaire, *L'ingénu*, chap. 6. Monnet/Deny (§89: 2:243).

delicately balanced against a desire that she can express only indirectly and, as it were, despite herself—as well as European sexual customs in general (“je vous épouse” for something else); and the *Ingénu*, whose given name, Hercule, has explicit reverberations of sexual prowess,²⁷ is of course not a villain but merely a lover who is not going about things in quite the approved way. At the same time, it must be said that Voltaire is always intent to lend relief to the ideological motivations of his characters and thus makes it evident that the possibility of such situations arises from socio-political circumstances that implicitly encourage them. But like virtually all his contemporaries, he manifests little conviction of the criminality of purported rape. *Ce qui plaît aux dames* [What women like] (1764) begins as the story of a quasi-rape; Robert has promised his twenty écus to the woman for her favors but is unable to pay since his horse has been stolen during the performance of the act:

Marthon ne peut digérer son injure,
 Et va porter sa plainte à Dagobert.
 "Un chevalier, dit-elle, m'a pillée,
 Et violée, et surtout point payée."
 Le sage prince à Marthon répondit:
 "C'est de viol que je vois qu'il s'agit.
 Allez plaider devant ma femme Berthe. . . ." ²⁸

[Unable to abide the injury she has suffered, Marthon carried her complaint to Dagobert. "A knight," she said, "has robbed and raped me, and above all not paid me." The wise prince answered her: "I see it's a case of rape. Go plead your case before my wife Bertha. . . ."]

But the rest of the story concerns his fate and not hers. Moreover, she has disqualified herself from any high moral position by her own sexual venality; the *surtout point payé* implies that she resents the rape less than the robbery. On the other hand, Voltaire dramatizes the sexual extortion practiced against Mlle de St. Yves in *L'ingénu* because in that context the violence is political, a sign of religious and governmental corruption.

Then, too, there are rapes properly speaking; they run the gamut from satire to high drama, in terms both of the narrative texts and of their visual representations. Insofar as the norms of painting are concerned, the theme of rape could not readily comply with the degree of decorum expected. The explicitly sexual could, however, be detoured in such a way that the dramatic emphasis fell instead on armed force: this is the case for the rape of the Sabines, which Poussin had represented long before the (now) more famous version by David; and also of Le Sueur's *Rape of Tamar* (Metropolitan Museum of Art), of which the essential subject is coercion, the sexual act itself being symbolized only by the overturned urn spilling water on the floor.

La Fontaine's "La clochette" is one example of genteel edulcoration, for it is really no more than the prettified story ("conte frivole") of the rape of a thirteen-year-old girl. The male protagonist, failing to engage the interest of the pretty thing "aux blanches dents, aux pieds nus, au corps gent" yet believing "tout artifice libre en amours," hides one of her cows in the woods; when she searches for it by following the sound of the bell, which he is manipulating:

Jugez, lecteur, quelle fut sa surprise
 Quand elle ouït la voix de son amant.
 Belle, dit-il, toutes chose est permise

Pour se tirer de l'amoureux tourment;
 A ce discours, la fille toute en transe
 Remplit de cris ces lieux peu fréquentés;
 Nul n'accourut. O belles évitez
 Le fond des bois et leur vaste silence.
 (La Fontaine 1980: 390)

[Guess her surprise, good reader, when she heard,
 A lover's voice, who would not be deterred.
 Said he, fair maid whene'er the heart's on fire,
 'Tis all permitted that can quench desire.
 On this, with piercing cries she rent the air;
 But no one came: —she sunk to dire despair.
 Ye beauteous dames avoid the Sylvan shade;
 Dread dangers solitary woods pervade.
 (La Fontaine, trans. Anon., 1:234)]

That is the end of the poem, and a curiously amoral one it is; for it no more than barely disguises sexual aggression under the faintly sentimental term *amoureux tourment*, and even more surprisingly it does not attempt to rationalize the violence in the usual way, namely, by affirming or at least implying that she appreciated what befell her and even came back for more: compare for example the conclusion to Dorat's "Le Chemin perdu et retrouvé" [The path lost and found again], where the *bergère* is (mis)led into a dark wood:

Mais, cher Lecteur, ce que je sais très bien,
 C'est que Perrette, admirons sa prudence,
 A l'endroit du danger retourna mille fois,
 Et prit toujours, de préférence,
 Par le chemin du petit bois.²⁹

[But what I know well, dear reader, is that Perrette, with admirable prudence, returned many times to the place of danger, and always took by preference the path through the small wood.]

Such a moral is nonetheless implicit in Fragonard's version for La Fontaine's story (figure 6.26): its action is vivid but its impassioned elegance, similar to that of *Le verrou*, suggests that she looks forward to the consummation. The proverbial formulation in La Fontaine's last sentence paradoxically combines an ominous evocation of the girl's helplessness (the *vaste silence* that alone answers to her cry for help) with an admonition of wisdom im-



6.26 La Fontaine, "La clochette." Fragonard/
Dambrun (§45: 1:235).

plying that since she courted the danger by failure to avoid (*éviter*) the dark forest, she bears some responsibility for what occurred there.

It is important to keep these willful differences of tone in perspective, both in terms of the text and of the artist's own emphasis. In *La pucelle d'Orléans* Voltaire is mocking Christian legend and morals, so the questions of violence and sex there are mock-heroic and dovetail easily with the sexual and other kinds of humor that permeate the poem as a whole. Yet an artist like Moreau does not focus with any noticeable predilection upon the passages from which one could draw the most visual sexual scenes. In canto five, where Grisbourdon recounts (to Satan) how he attempted to rape Jeanne, Moreau chooses for his illustration the setting for this narration (the court in Hell) rather than its content (figure 6.27). Another, anonymous illustrator later makes the opposite choice (figure 6.28), tying it instead to this passage:

Jeanne la forte et Jeanne la rebelle,
Perdait bientôt ce grand nom de pucelle:
Entre mes bras elle se débattait,



6.27 "The monk,
o'ercome by saintly
tremor dire, / Kissed
the sharp talons of his
dreaded sire." Voltaire,
La pucelle d'Orléans,
canto 5. Moreau/
Baquoy (§85).

Le muletier par dessous la tenait,
Hermaphrodix de bon coeur ricanait.
Mais croiriez-vous ce que je vais vous dire?
L'air s'entr'ouvrit, et du haut de l'empire
Qu'on nomme ciel, lieux où ni vous ni moi
N'irons jamais, et vous savez pourquoi,
Je vis descendre, ô fatale merveille!
Cet animal qui porte longue oreille,
Et qui jadis à Balaam parla,
Quand Balaam sur la montagne alla.
(Voltaire 1970: 354)

[Joan, the rebellious, Joan of naught afraid,
Was soon to lose the envied name of maid;
Already circled in my nervous arms,
She struggled stoutly for her virgin charms,
The muleteer beneath our damsel pinned,

Hermaphrodix the while maliciously grinned.

“But, will ye credence to my story yield,
The air opened wide, when from that azure field
Called Heaven—(a place which neither you nor I
Shall ever see, ye know the reason why)
I saw descend—O miracle most dread!
That beast who carries monstrous ears on head,
Which Balaam bespoke in ancient time,
When Balaam the mountain steep would climb.”
(Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 40:181)]

While it is the miraculous rescue that the text stresses (the illustration merely signals that it is on its way), the comic rape—that is, the apparent threat to Jeanne’s ludicrously important virginity—is the real subject of



6.28 “The muleteer
beneath our damsel
pinned. . . .” Voltaire,
La pucelle d’Orléans,
canto 5. Anon. (§88:
1:88).



6.29 "At this distracting sight, the young Monrose / Darts on, with sword in hand to interpose. . . ." Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 10. Marillier/Dupréel (§89: 1:153).

the figure. Yet if we were to isolate Jeanne from the grotesque Hermaphrodix and flying ass on the left, there is nothing inherently humorous about her subjection to violence and expression of distress. Contrariwise, it is the lack of such purity in Agnes Sorel that is the joke of canto ten. Marillier's interpretation of her rape by Chandos's chaplain, situated at the moment when Monrose arrives to save her, spares her the embarrassment (so to speak) of being represented explicitly (figure 6.29):

Il rentre, il voit le damné de frapart
 Qui tout en feu dans sa brutale joie
 Se démenait, et dévorait sa proie.
 Le beau Monrose à cet objet fatal,
 Le fer en main vole sur l'animal. . . .
 Monrose est plein d'amour et de courage,
 Et l'aumônier de luxure et de rage.
 (Voltaire 1970: 421)

{He entering views of things the damning state,
 Beholds the chaplain brutal rage obey,

Abusing with unbridled lust his prey;
 At this distracting sight, the young Monrose
 Darts on, with sword in hand to interpose; . . .
 Monrose with love redoubled strength acquires,
 The priest is furious, spurred by sensual fires.
 (Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 40:285–86)

The pleasantry has little to do with rape as such, although it has a lot to do with the lasciviousness of priests. It must, though, be savored in context—specifically, awareness of the fact that before the day is over Agnes will have had *two* more sexual encounters (one with Monrose), and not at all unwillingly. Although mistress of the king of France, Agnes is as sensual and available as Jeanne herself is intact and impregnable. Once again, however, Moreau illustrates a quite different, and relatively innocuous, scene describing the moment where Agnes takes refuge in a convent (figure 6.30). In the lines that supply the caption she suggests that her sins are analogous to Magdalene's:



6.30 “And should I
 bliss of Paradise e’er
 ken, / My seat will
 be beside Saint Mag-
 dalen.” Voltaire, *La*
pucelle d’Orléans, canto
 10. Moreau/Croutelle
 (§85).

Agnès répond: C'est pour moi trop d'honneur,
 Je suis, ma soeur, une pauvre mondaine;
 De grands péchés mes beaux jours sont ourdis,
 Et si jamais je vais en paradis,
 Je n'y serai qu'après de Magdeleine.
 (Voltaire 1970: 429)

["Ah!" replied Agnes: "You to me accord
 Far too much honor; I'm but a wordly soul,
 Have all my youth, owned flagrant sin's control,
 And should I bliss of Paradise e'er ken,
 My seat will be beside Saint Magdalen."
 (Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 40:294)]

She appears as wholesome and innocent as a bride, but in the narrative context the scene is suffused with a further cynical ramification: for Soeur Besogne, who here receives Agnes under her protection, is a male in disguise, who in fact will spend the night in her bed.

There is no such wry smile lurking behind the representation by Louis Binet (figure 6.31) of Edmond's rape of Mme Parangon in Restif's *Le paysan perversi*:

Dans mon emportement, je froissais, je meurtrissais avec une abominable brutalité ces appas enchanteurs, ces membres délicats, qui ne doivent recevoir que des adorations et des caresses... Employer la violence... Ah, Dieu!... et je l'ai employée... avec qui! et quelle est la victime de ce forfait horrible?... Ce que je respecte le plus au monde.³⁰

[In my excitement, I scraped and crushed with disgusting brutality those enchanting charms, those delicate limbs which should be reserved for adoration and caresses... To use violence... Oh, God! and I did... with whom! and who was the victim of this horrible crime?... What in the whole world I most respected.]

But there is a subtler form of dramatic irony in the many doubts to which this scene gives rise, doubts especially about Mme Parangon's basic will to resist, and, in terms of the author's intentions, about why he wanted this to happen and be presented in this way. Since it is quite certain in the case of Restif that the text and image are conceived as one, there is all the more reason for reading them as complementary. The text is not very descriptive, indeed, it is above all subjective; Restif leaves it literally to the picture to "show" the event that the text designates only obliquely. Picturing a rape is, despite all the degradation present in the novel, a rather bold



6.31 Restif de la Bretonne, *Le paysan perversi*. Binet/Le Roy (§69: 2:146).

act; its decency is marginally maintained here thanks only to the abundant clothing that at least covers (even if it does not disguise) what the bodies in their unmistakable postures are doing. In a sense it respects her dignity by refusing to attenuate her resistance with a hint of complicity.

Danaë

In the legend of Danaë, sexual allusion takes a sublimated form, which then returns with a double connotation. Although imprisoned by her father precisely to prevent her from bearing the fruit (Perseus) who is to cause his own death, Danaë is impregnated by a Jupiter transformed into a shower of gold. In other words, the gold that he rains down upon her both displaces the sexual signified and compounds it with a mercenary one; the implications of the overall situation are not of prostitution in any ordinary sense, but, more indulgently, of the (feminine) love of gold and a certain



6.32 "Gold a Receipt for Love." Bickham/Bickham (§11: 2:54).

willingness to be rewarded for sexual indulgences. This is the subject of an anonymous song, "Gold a Receipt for Love,"³¹ illustrated by George Bickham (figure 6.32) and based upon the Jovian legend:

When love and youth cannot make way,
 Nor with the fair avail,
 To bend to Cupid's gentle sway,
 What art can then prevail?

I'll tell you, Strephon, a receipt
 Of a most sovereign power,
 If you the stubborn would defeat,
 Let drop a golden shower.

This method tried enamoured Jove,
 Before he could obtain
 The cold regardless Danae's love,
 Or conquer her disdain.

By Cupid's self I have been told,
 He never wounds a heart
 So deep as when he tips with gold
 The fatal piercing dart.

(§11: 2:54)

Gold is then itself a sexual signifier, taking a particularly phallic form in this text by “tipping” the conventional Cupid’s arrow; but it simultaneously signifies other things. “L’or et le fer” [Gold and iron] by Dorat is in this respect quite similar, as is the elegant illustration (figure 6.33), which once again alludes to Danaë, even if only as an example in a dispute of values between Iron and Gold (who is personified here):

J’anime et gouverne le monde:
 Dans les obscurs filons de la mine profonde
 Le soleil me mûrit; l’homme vient m’y chercher.
 Au fond d’un noir réduit Danaë se lamente;
 Acrise à tous les yeux dérobe ce trésor:
 Jupiter tombe en gouttes d’or,
 Et, sous cet or fluide, il obtient son amante.
 (§23: 84)

[I am the life and ruler of the world: in the dark veins of the deep mine the sun matures me; man comes to find me. Deep in a dark redoubt Danaë laments; Acrise hides this treasure from all eyes: Jupiter falls in drops of gold, and under this liquid gold wins his mistress.]

But Iron, though stigmatized as the instrument of the machines of war,

6.33 Dorat, “L’or et le fer,” headpiece. Marillier/De Ghendt (§23: 83).



has the last word: "Je les détruis... tu les corromps"; and of this, too, Danaë could serve as a symbol.

In fact, this association is not uncommon. Returning to Voltaire's *Ce qui plaît aux dames*,³² we find Marthon taking butter and fresh eggs to market when Robert makes his proposal:

Sire Robert, ému de convoitise,
Descend d'un saut, l'accolé avec franchise:
"J'ai vingt écus, dit-il, dans ma valise;
C'est tout mon bien, prenez encor mon coeur:
Tout est à vous. —C'est pour moi trop d'honneur,
Lui dit Marthon." Robert presse la belle,
La fait tomber, et tombe aussitôt qu'elle
Et la renverse, et casse tous ses oeufs.

[Sire Robert, stirred with lust, came over in a bound and accosted her straightforwardly: "I have twenty écus," he said, "in my bag; it's all I have; take my heart also: everything is yours.—You do me too much honor, said Marthon. Robert advances, makes her fall, and falls down with her, and puts her flat on her back, and breaks all her eggs.]

The conclusion goes on to combine the equivalence of milk (here, butter) and eggs as sexual symbols with this ironic hint of mercenary interest:

Enfin Marthon, rajustant sa coiffure,
Dit à Robert: "Où sont mes vingt écus?"³³

[Finally Marthon, straightening her hair, said to Robert: "Where are my twenty écus?"]

La Fontaine's tale "Le petit chien qui secoue de l'argent et des pierreries" [The little dog that shakes off silver and jewels] is the story of how both a wife and her husband are brought to sell their favors for gold and jewels; but all its charm is concentrated on the wife's seduction by the little dog who really is the fairy Manto. The poem begins with this disabused, materialistic reduction of sentiment:

La clef du coffre-fort et des coeurs c'est la même:
Que si ce n'est celle des coeurs,
C'est du moins celle des faveurs.
(La Fontaine 1980: 248)

[The key, which opes the chest of hoarded gold,
Unlocks the heart that favours would withhold.
(La Fontaine, trans. Anon., 1:165)]

—which is reinforced by the supposed equivalence of the exchange: the money-shedding dog for a night of love with its owner. “Une nuit de Madame aussi c’est un trésor” [A night with your ladyship too is a treasure], says her nurse, thus thematizing neatly the equivalence of sex and gold. The illustration by Eisen (figure 6.34) is based upon a kind of litotes of the scene in which Madame indeed accepts his proposition when the dog begins showering jewels:

Ce n’est pas tout; il se secoue:
Aussitôt perles de tomber,
Nourrice de les ramasser,
Soubrettes de les enfiler,
Pèlerin de les attacher
A de certains bras, dont il loue
La blancheur et le reste. Enfin il fait si bien
Qu’avant que partir de la place
On traite avec lui de son chien.
On lui donne un baiser pour arrhes de la grâce
Qu’il demandait; et la nuit vint.
(1980: 255)

[The little fav’rite sought again to prove
His wond’rous worth, and scattered o’er the ground,
With sudden shake, among the servants round,
Nice pearls, which they on strings arranged with care,
And these the pilgrim offered to the fair;
Gallantly fastened them around her arms,
Admired their whiteness and extolled her charms.
So well he managed, ’twas at length agreed,
In what his heart desired he should succeed;
The dog was bought; the belle bestowed a kiss,
As earnest of the promised future bliss.
(La Fontaine, trans. Anon., 1:178–79)]

Now this busy illustration is quite decent as bedroom scenes go; only reference to the text makes the sexual trade-off of all these associations patent. On another level, though, the *petit chien* itself is a bearer of sexual connota-



6.34 La Fontaine,
"Le petit chien qui
secoue de l'argent et des
pierreries." Eisen/de
Longueil (§44: 1:159).

tions, as we shall have occasion to note in Chapter 8; and as such, given her hope of possessing him, he implies that the female's desire mediates that of the male.

Galatea

When the voyeur is himself the creator, he views and covets only the object of his own imagination, the projection of his desires generated from within; what he sees cannot protect itself, and his Europa is his own private ideal. With Ovid, the rib of Adam whence biblical woman was created is instead a chisel and man himself is the creator. Pygmalion's story may not seem very violent, because what he did after all was only to love Galatea enough to want to infuse life into her; thus in some sense she represents

the triumph of art and beauty or even of femininity (over a man who had foresworn women). It is nonetheless a powerful metaphor of phallocratie and the ancient theme of subordination of woman's very existence to man's desires.

The many representations of this subject in the eighteenth century, even those specifically illustrating the Ovid text, all stylize it in certain rather predictable ways. They overlook the detail that the statue was of ivory, not marble, and much more significantly the fact that Galatea comes to life in *Pygmalion's bed* rather than on a pedestal: this explicitly sensuous element is therebyedulcorated and the whole meaning veers decidedly in the direction of allegory. But by their very existence they defy another paradox also. For Galatea cannot be pictured; although she looks absolutely real, she manifests a beauty "qu'aucune femme ne peut tenir de la nature" [that no woman can receive from nature].³⁴ Indeed, Galatea is pure metaphor. As Rousseau's Pygmalion says to her, "Vénus même est moins belle que vous" [Venus herself is not so fair as you]³⁵—implying again an essential distinction between Venus, who can and must be represented, and the transcendent superlative, who cannot. This would not have pleased Ovid's Venus, who is rewarding Pygmalion's devotion to her by granting the statue life. It could also be seen as a revelation of Pygmalion's own *hubris*.

Whether remembering this or not, Melchior Grimm confronts the paradox in the case of Étienne Falconet's much-discussed statue in the *Salon* of 1763: "Le miracle qui combla l'artiste de joie et de surprise consistait donc dans la métamorphose de ces beaux muscles de pierre en muscles de chair véritable. Or, comment exprimer cette métamorphose en marbre, et par le ciseau?" [The miracle which filled the artist with joy and surprise thus consisted in the metamorphosis of those beautiful stone muscles into real flesh. But how can this metamorphosis be expressed in marble, and by a chisel?]³⁶ For Falconet had forced the issue by trying to *represent* Galatea by *creating* her, yet at the same time realizing *her* creator Pygmalion in the same medium, which is, literally, contradictory. (Actually, he incarnates *three* states of being, for in addition to the real stone statue and the real human artist, there is the otherworldly, celestial, or mythic cherub.) In any other medium, that oddity cannot compromise this particular subject, since both sculpture and sculptor would necessarily be transposed.

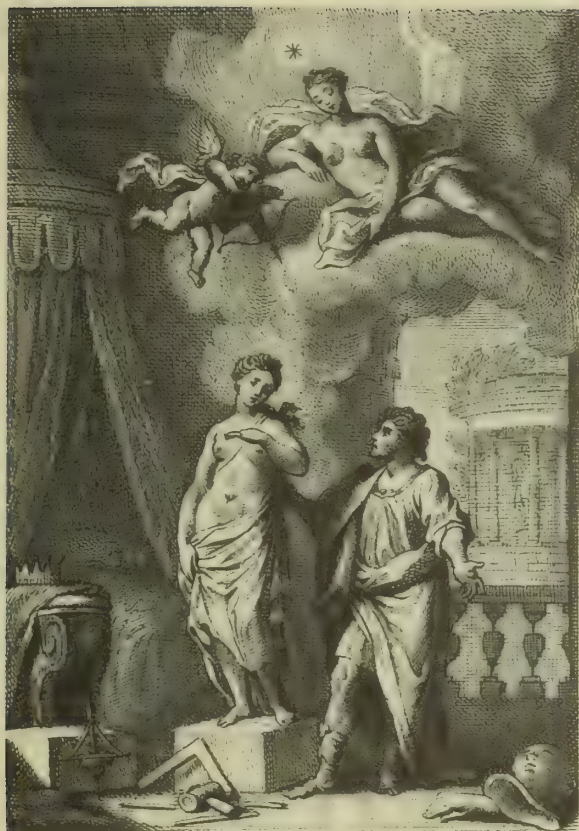
These fascinating illustrations deserve study at length in their own right. Boucher makes a sumptuous illustration for Ovid, full of clouds and cupids and a large angel (perhaps Venus herself). Were it not for the pedestal, it would hardly be evident that Galatea was ever stone or Pygmalion a sculptor, and his studio becomes a huge Greek temple (figure 6.35).



6.35 "Pygmalion falls in love with a statue he has made, and Venus brings her to life." Ovid, *Métamorphoses*. Boucher/Le Mire (§63: 3:215).

Alongside this one, Zocchi's illustration looks positively Spartan (figure 6.36): Pygmalion there is definitely a sculptor but Galatea could well remain stone though she is hardly distinguishable in texture from Venus, who with Cupid hovers overhead. The bed, in this one instance, connotes desire and alludes to Ovid's locus for the metamorphosis.

In terms of this comparison, Dennel's engraving of the Lagrenée painting is an interesting and technically sophisticated compromise (figure 6.37).³⁷ A painting can of course distinguish by color between marble and flesh (one has only to think of Watteau's use of statues, which seem more ambiguous in the engravings that derive from them), and Dennel found a way to achieve a comparable effect with the burin: he engraves Galatea's fleshly upper body in the same way he does Pygmalion's and Venus's, but he begins precisely at the thighs to employ a regular, slightly spiraled stroke that translates the hardness of marble (like the dolphin beside her legs) and, most particularly, the reflections of light on its polished surface.



6.36 *Pygmalion*, from
Ovid's *Métamorphoses*.
Zocchi/Gregori (§64:
2:88).

(This is the same technique used by Picart in his illustration in Beaumarchais's *Le temple des Muses* [§39], where she has not yet been put to bed nor come to life.)³⁸ Her pudendum, veiled by a remnant of Venus's surrounding clouds to protect its representational ambiguity, is thus doubly, materially and diegetically, the critical transitional point. None of these illustrations constitutes more than a glance back at Ovid, although he set the tradition; it is obviously established by now that Galatea comes to life while standing, partially draped, on her pedestal before an adoring Pygmalion, and not while being fondled by him in bed. In this regard Falconer's influence was perhaps decisive.

The illustrations based upon Rousseau have to be put in a slightly different context, since his rewriting of the legend stresses the degree to which Galatea's essence is Pygmalion's own, in this ejaculatory language: "Je crois, dans mon délire, pouvoir m'élancer hors de moi; je crois pouvoir lui donner ma vie, et l'animer de mon âme" (In my delirium, I believe I can

6.37 *Pygmalion in Love with His Statue*, print.
Lagrenée/Dennel.



spring outside myself; I believe I can give her my life and animate her with my soul), says Pygmalion.³⁹ Whereas in the other versions of the story he creates only the *form* of Galatea, here he is responsible for her entire being. At the same time, this act of creation provokes a quite undecidable crisis of identity in himself: he will never know, presumably, whether she is the same or different from him. Moreau designed four quite intricate little headpieces for Berquin's verse adaptation of Rousseau's text, of which two are shown here.⁴⁰ The first (figure 6.38) represents Pygmalion in ecstasy before his unveiled statue, which he no longer dares touch. In the second (figure 6.39), she is apparently about to embrace Pygmalion, no longer even partially draped, just after having, through the act of touching first herself and then a marble statue, determined the limits between *moi* and *non-moi* and thus become conscious of her own existence. Since the statue in question happens to be of Venus and Cupid, this instant is meant to correspond to her realization of desire. Moreau's full plate for the complete works of Rousseau (figure 6.40) is yet more stylized. Pygmalion's adoring gesture makes him look, were it not for his clothing, as much like a statue as Galatea, who is captured precisely at the moment where the text says:

Galatée fait quelques pas et touche un marbre:
Ce n'est plus moi.⁴¹

[Galatea takes a few steps and touches a statue:
That is no longer me.]

All the accoutrements of the artist's studio are there, including the chisel that fell from his hands when he exclaimed: "Dieux! je sens la chair palpitante repousser le ciseau!" [Ye gods! I can feel the throbbing flesh resist the chisel!] (ibid., 1227); and her veil, whose form is reminiscent of the ones we earlier saw characterizing victims of *enlèvements*, appears light yet petrified in some kind of otherworldly, purely sculptural (or more exactly pictural, since it would be unachievable in stone) breeze. The nature of the statue she touches is not specified; Moreau lends it a dramatic pose and makes it seem to be looking at Galatea, engaged in some dialogue of form with her.

A variant on a semantically related topic, Gravelot's illustration of Voltaire's opera *Pandore* (figure 6.41) depicts the moment where Prometheus brings Pandora to life with the fire he has just brought down from heaven:

Que ce feu précieux, l'astre de la nature,
Que cette flamme pure

6.38 Berquin, *Pygmalion*, headpiece. Moreau/Ponce (§9).





6. 39 Berquin, *Pygmalion*, headpiece. Moreau/de Launay (§9).

Te mette au nombre des vivants.
 Terre, sois attentive à ces heureux instants:
 Lève-toi, cher objet, c'est l'Amour qui l'ordonne;
 A sa voix obéis toujours:
 Lève-toi, l'Amour te donne
 La vie, un coeur, et de beaux jours.

(§84, Act 2)

[May this precious fire, the star of nature; may this pure flame place you among the living. Earth, attend to these happy moments: arise, dear one, Love so commands; always obey his voice. Arise, Love gives you life, a heart, and happy days.]

In Voltaire's version Prometheus is the creator of Pandora; but she is without life, which was refused by jealous Jupiter, until he steals the fire. Pandora thus says of him:

Il est l'auteur de ma naissance,
 Mon roi, mon amant, mon époux.

(§84: Act 5)

[He is the author of my birth, my king, my lover, my spouse.]

For having created her, Prometheus has fallen in love with her just as Pygmalion with Galatea, and the essence of the situation is the same.

Why should we stress a theme like Pygmalion and not, for example, Narcissus? For if Rousseau and others seem to discover ever afresh the charms of Galatea, it is also true that he like others wrote a *Narcisse*, and some of these are illustrated. The response is essentially quantitative, though there are no global statistics to draw on. In the eighteenth century one does not encounter anywhere near the level of fascination for as sexually ambiguous a character as Narcissus that exists for the more obviously channeled topoi of conventional, heterosexual male desire. Moreover, and this, too, is perhaps a function of the relative weakness of its magnetic force, the images one does find for this particular myth generally fail, in my view, to excite much wonderment—which is to say that they are semiotically anemic. Of what interest is Narcissus looking at himself in the water, if the reflection or its setting is not somehow laced with further echoes and connotations? The Pygmalion/Galatea topos, in contrast, provokes a range of artistic responses whose subtle distinctions are myriad, even when the base text (usually Ovid) remains the same. And even though the catalogue of motifs repertoried in this study is far from exhaustive, they all seem to me to share this quality that consists partly in repetition, but partly also in variation and connotative visual contextualization.

6.40 Rousseau, "Pygmalion." Moreau/Le Mire (§72: 7:45). 6.41 "May this pure flame. . . ." Voltaire, *Pandore*. Gravelot/Aug. de Saint-Aubin et Tilliard (§84).



7 *Exploitations*

The Storm

The sleeping woman is a gentle image of helplessness, and a really domestic image at that, even if she is sometimes represented against a stylized natural decor. But other, more extreme victimizations are also to be found in the illustrated corpus, including those inflicted more or less by nature herself. A seductress may even achieve her effects by playing upon the sympathy that conventional signs of feminine weakness are supposed to elicit: thus, in Tasso's *Jérusalem délivrée* Tancred must resist the feigned death throes of Armida (figure 7.1) if he is to depart with his comrades and thus fulfill his duty to Christendom, which the ship symbolizes; her unveiled breast reminds him, and the viewer too, of the sensual delights he is being required to renounce.

Insofar as the forces of nature can be presumed to render woman helpless and vulnerable, they in various ways abet seduction if not male violence.¹ In the simplest and most gallant form, this topos is manifested in the storm, which furnishes both a motive and a setting for the privacies of the couple. Usually the context is pastoral, with the shepherdess at first modestly hesitant—

C'est trop d'avoir à craindre
L'orage et son berger.

['Tis much to have to fear both the storm and the shepherd.]

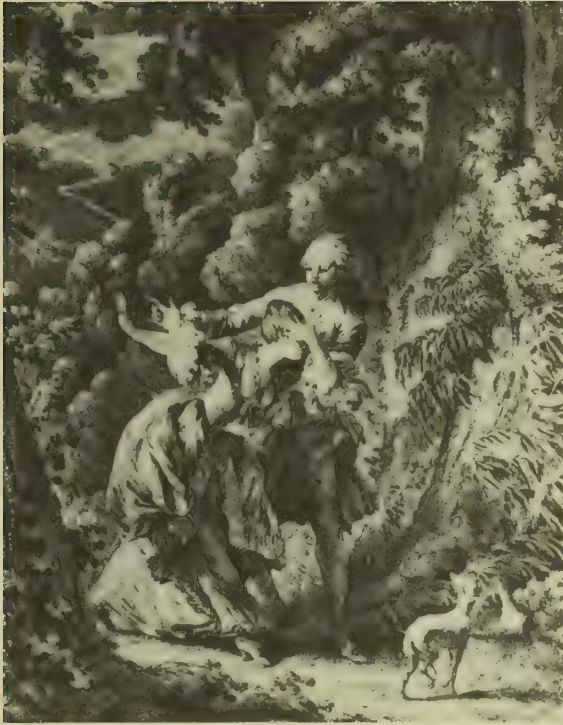
These lines from Colardeau's "L'effet de la peur" express Lise's reluctance to seek shelter in the grove where her *berger* invites her. But her fear of the storm is finally decisive (fear is of course, by sexual typology, not a factor for the male); it is also the focus of Moreau's lushly dramatic illustration (figure 7.2):



7.1 "A cold, chill sweat runs down her limbs, and her eyes slowly close." Tasso, *Jérusalem délivrée*, canto 16. Le Barbier/Thomas (§80: 2:180).

Lise au bocage s'arrête
Et n'ose y pénétrer,
Un coup de la tempête
Enfin l'y fait entrer.
La foudre au loin s'égare;
On évite ses traits,
Mais ceux qu'Amour prépare
Ne nous manquent jamais.

Ce dieu pendant l'orage
Profite des moments;
Caché dans le nuage,
Son oeil suit les amants.
Lise de son asile
Sortit d'un air confus;
Le ciel devint tranquille,
Son coeur ne l'était plus.
(§40: 1:114)



7.2 "The storm's wrath compels her to enter."
Colardeau, "L'effet de la peur." Moreau/Moreau
(§40: 1:114).

[Lise stops at the bower and dares not enter, but the storm's wrath compels her to. The lightning fades into the distance; you can escape its bolts, but those aimed by Cupid never miss. Cupid takes advantage of the storm: hidden in the cloud, his eye follows the lovers. Lise emerges shaken from her shelter; now the sky is calm but her heart no longer is.]

The violence of nature changes places with inner peace, a witty transposition devoid of moral overtones. Amour, an active agent in the verse, is not metaphorized in the illustration. As to the whippet, which is definitely not a sheep dog, it constitutes a conventional suggestion of the sexual nature of the encounters.

Repeated manifestations of such a blatant topos are testimony to the extraordinary staying power of pastoral motifs throughout the eighteenth century; they seem a tireless resource in the imagistic landscape. In Pezay's view, for being overdone they are nonetheless inherently charming; he writes in the preface to *La nouvelle Zélis au bain*: "Tous ces détails un peu surannés de la bergerie, mais rajeunis par l'imagination du poète, ces scènes mélancoliques, ces esquisses champêtres, même avec leurs défauts, auront toujours un prix pour les coeurs sensibles" [All those outmoded

details of shepherding, rejuvenated by the poet's hand, those melancholy scenes, country sketches, even with their flaws, will still have their value for sensitive souls] (§57: 13–14). Inherently sexual to begin with, the pastoral adapts well to endless variation through parasitic adjuncts such as the storm. Their function is not ultimately very different from that of La Fontaine's "La clochette" except that it is ostensibly less contrived: since one does not summon a storm at will, the aggressor appears merely to be taking advantage of a fortuitous circumstance rather than baiting his victim in bad faith. But this logical status would obtain only in nature, not in *represented* nature; for in poetry as in art, a storm is as easily conjured as any other pretext for seduction.

Berquin, never one to fault a commonplace, exploits this one twice in his *Idylles*. The fourth poem, obviously enough entitled "L'orage" [The storm], is written in a manneristically archaic style as if mimicking a medieval legend. Thus: "Silvanire et Blanchette allaient parlant d'amour" [Silvanire and Blanchette were talking of love]—the usual occupation of shepherds who are really just the human equivalent of doves—when a storm breaks:

Où fuir? tant s'obscurcit l'ombre tempêteuse!
 Là près, est vieille roche. Ils s'en courent dedans.
 Et leur sort ne plaignez. Roche, tant soit affreuse,
 Est doux Olympe à vrais amants.

Or la nue à torrents roule aux flancs des montagnes.
 La grêle sautillante encomble creux sillons;
 Diriez foudres et vents, par les vastes campagnes,
 Guerroyer en noirs tourbillons.

A sa Blanchette en vain par doux mots et caresses,
 Bien veut l'ami berger cacher telles horreurs;
 Bien lui veut-elle aussi rendre douces tendresses,
 Et ne lui viennent que des pleurs.

Voyez, dit-elle, ami, voici venir froidure,
 Ne vont plus les oiselets s'aimer jusqu'aux beaux jours:
 Or s'aimaient comme nous; comme eux, si d'aventure,
 Allions nous trouver sans amours!

(§8: 1:15)

[Where to hide? The storm cloud has become so dark! Nearby is an old cave: they run inside. No complaints for their fate. The frightful cave is

dear Olympus to true lovers. Now the storm rolls in torrents over the mountainside. Rebounding hail fills empty furrows as if lightning and wind were warring in black swirls over the vast landscape. The shepherd tries in vain with kind words and caresses to hide the deluge from Blanchette; she would like to reciprocate in tender gestures, but only tears come to her eyes. You see, my friend, she says, winter is coming and the birds will no longer be in love until spring: they loved like us, and what if we like they were to find ourselves one day without love!]

The pastoral setting lends itself at the same time, as can be seen here, to the bucolic tradition; while working his way around to the sexual scene, the poet can freely indulge the description-of-nature topos. When a poem starts this way, for example—

Heureuse la beauté champêtre
Qui, sans art, sait nous enflammer;
Aimable, sans chercher à l'être;
Riche de piaire, et de charmer!²

[Happy the country beauty that can enflame us artlessly; loving without trying, rich to please and to charm!]

—one knows very well what to expect. These two related conventions converge symbolically in Berquin's poem, since the insecurity that above all troubles Blanchette is expressed via the approaching end of the fair season. But her father, learning of the adventure and her qualms, simply marries the two lovers,

Et ce cruel hiver que tant craignait Blanchette,
La saison fut de ses plaisirs.
(§8: 1:15)

[And the cruel season that Blanchette so feared became the season of her pleasures.]

This level of discourse does not come through in Marillier's illustration, which settles for the dependable presence of the cave with its monumental, vaginal orifice to bring the lovers intimately together (figure 7.3).

Berquin's second title, "L'orage favorable," is even more explicit. The illustration stays close to the literal gist of a few lines of text (figure 7.4):

Tu cours. Il n'est plus temps. Viens. Où vas-tu? Suis-moi.
Ton chien sous ce rocher nous découvre un asile,
Suivons-le. Tu pâlis? Thémire, sois tranquille,



7.3 Berquin, "L'orage." Marillier/Le Gouaz (§8: 1:15). 7.4 Berquin, "L'orage favorable." Marillier/de Launay (§8: 2:25).

Sans te parler d'amour, j'y serai près de toi.
 Ce lieu, de deux amants, fut souvent la retraite.
 Qu'il vit de doux larcins et de tendres faveurs!
 Il va n'être témoin que d'une ardeur discrète,
 Hélas! il ne verra que d'injustes rigueurs.
 Quel berger cependant plus fidèle ou plus tendre,
 Mérita mieux... Mais non, non, cachons mon tourment.
 Thémire, tu croirais que je veux te surprendre.
 Pourtant si tu voulais, si tu voulais m'entendre!
 Quand pourrais-je trouver un plus heureux moment?...
 Mais quoi! dans ta frayeur, tremblante et sans haleine,
 Comme si tu craignais que je pusse te fuir,
 Tu serres ma main dans la tienne,
 Pour tâcher de me retenir?
 (§8: 2:25)

{You flee, but it is too late. Come. Where are you going? Follow me.
 Your dog has found us a shelter under this rock; let us follow him. You
 pale? Be calm, Thémire; I will be with you but will not talk of love.

This spot was often the asylum of lovers; what sweet thefts and tender favors it had seen! It will witness only a timid passion; alas, it will see merely an unjust resistance. What shepherd more faithful and tender was ever more deserving... But no, I must keep my suffering silent. You fear, Thémire, being caught unawares. Yet if you were willing, if you would hear me! When will I find a more opportune moment?... But look: trembling and breathless in your fright, as if you feared that I might leave you alone, you hold my hand to keep me by your side!]

The sexual meaning is understated and derives again from the tempest-happiness contrast. It turns out as usual that Thémire is not so hostile after all, and the poem ends:

Ta rougeur... un soupir... Thémire, tu souris.
 Ah! c'est m'en dire assez, oui, j'entends ce langage.
 Et toi qui de mes maux devais finir le cours,
 Redouble tes fureurs, ô bienfaisant orage,
 Voici le plus beau de mes jours.
 (§8: 2:25)

[You blush... you sigh... Thémire, you smile. Ah, you've said enough; yes, I understand this language. O kind tempest, that came to end my sorrows, unleash your fury: this is the happiest of my days.]

The *bienfaisant orage* is thus the friendly, pastoral face of nature's collaboration in a general reproductive strategy.

Its more violent face is the storm at sea, followed by shipwreck and drowning—more often near-drowning. The classical tale of Hero and Leander was evoked on occasion, for example in Beaumarchais's *Le temple des Muses* and in a poem by Dorat,³ but its influence seems mitigated by the fact that it is the male figure who is victim of the waves; Hero's fate, while flowing from his, is an individual act. But when a woman is drowning, even the universal deluge can be recast as a love story.⁴ Even when there is nothing erotic about the context, or the woman is no more the focus of the action than other characters, as is the case for the rescue of Amazili and Télasco by Orozimbo in Marmontel's *Les Incas*, the illustration normally foregrounds all the same the elegant, supine female body (figure 7.5).

In essence, a helpless woman traditionally calls forth the heroic strength of a savior, at whose mercy she then (often willingly) remains. It is this moment of abandon alone that is stressed in the Le Barbier plate for the trite poem of Saint-Alphonse, "L'heureux naufrage" [The fortunate shipwreck] (figure 7.6), in which Silvanire watches from the shore while the



7.5 "Forget about me,
and save Telasco!"
Marmontel, *Les Incas*.
Moreau/de Launay
(§55: 1: 323).

ship bearing the woman he loves, Thémire (once again), and her fiancé, Ariston, is caught in a violent storm:

Après une vaine défense
Thémire tombe dans les flots.

Le lâche Ariston de sa belle
Sans frémir voit le triste sort;
Vainement Thémire l'appelle,
C'est pour lui seul qu'il craint la mort.
A ce spectacle Silvanire,
Plein du plus amoureux transport,
S'élance, nage vers Thémire,
Et bientôt la remène au port.
Par les soins du berger fidèle,
Thémire enfin revoit le jour;

Silvanire, c'est toi, dit-elle,
Toi dont j'ai méprisé l'amour!
Sois heureux: mon âme attendrie
Pour jamais te donne sa foi;
Tu viens de me sauver la vie,
Je ne vivrai plus que pour toi.

(§40: 4:76-77)

[Struggling in vain, Thémire falls into the waves. Cowardly Ariston watches the unhappy fate of his belle: in vain Thémire calls to him; he fears death only for himself. Seeing this, Silvanire, transported with love, plunges in and swims to Thémire; soon he brings her to port. Thanks to the faithful shepherd's care, Thémire finally opens her eyes. It's you, Silvanire, she says, you whose love I spurned! Be happy now: my grateful soul is yours forever; you have saved my life and I will live henceforth only for you.]

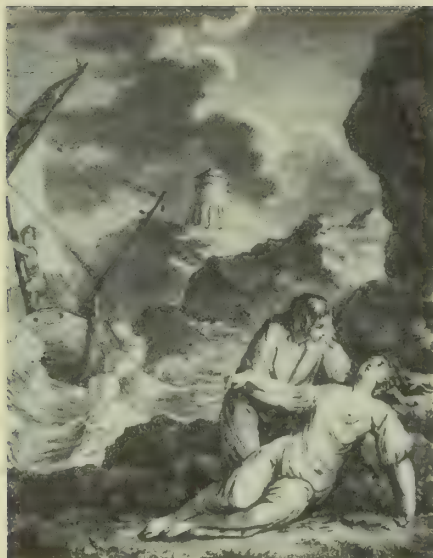
The very helplessness of the damsel in distress has instantly sorted out the cad from the brave hero, who with no noticeable difficulty "bientôt la ramène au port": the graphic sexual metaphor of coming into port is a common feature in erotic verse. The poem is a pure exercise in form, and so is the engraving.

In a subject adapted from Gessner, Berquin represents in "Le naufrage" the anxieties of Eglé, awaiting, as evening descends, the return of Daphnis's rowboat from across the river. First she faints from anxiety, then has her fears confirmed by sighting the hull of an overturned boat:

L'écho porta, dans toute la contrée,
Le cri perçant de sa douleur.
Les cheveux hérissés, et la vue égarée,
Elle meurtrit son sein. De sourds et longs sanglots
Etouffent sa pénible haleine:
Mourante, elle s'écrie à peine,
Daphnis, mon cher Daphnis! et soudain, à ces mots,
Elle se plonge dans les flots.

(§8: 1:33-37)

[Her piercing cry of grief echoed throughout the countryside. With hair disheveled, eyes distraught, she tore her breast. Long, muffled sobs choked her heavy breath; dying, she could barely cry: Daphnis, my dear Daphnis! And suddenly, with these words, she dove into the waves.]



7.6 "Thanks to the faithful shepherd's care, Thémire finally opens her eyes." Saint-Alphonse, "L'heureux naufrage." Le Barbier/Masquelier (§40: 4:74). 7.7 Berquin, "Le naufrage." Marillier/Le Gouaz (§8: 1:33).

The illustration (figure 7.7) seizes on the word *sein* to render explicit the sexual connotations of the scene by means of a bared breast of microscopic delicacy (the width of her exposed bust here is only about 3 mm in the engraving). By great luck she and Daphnis meet on an island to which each has been separately ferried by the current. The poem's expression of their affectionate display at this point is displaced into a simile that reveals how utterly contrived and rigidly conventional is the whole semantic setting:

Telle et moins tendre encore est la jeune Fauvette,
 Qui, s'envolant de sa prison,
 Retrouve, au bois, son fidèle Pinson.
 Le malheureux! dans sa douleur muette,
 Il languissait sous un épais buisson.
 Elle vole vers lui. Cent caresses nouvelles
 De leurs jeunes amours ont réveillé l'ardeur;
 Ils unissent leurs becs, ils enlacent leurs ailes:
 Ils sont heureux et chantent leur bonheur.
 (id.)

{So, but yet less tender, is the young Fauvette who finds in the woods

the dear canary that had escaped from its cage. The sad lover, suffering silently, languished in a thick bush. She flew to him. A hundred caresses reawakened the flames of their young love; they joined their beaks and intertwined their wings: they were happy and sang their joy.]

Of all representations in this general category, one of the most stunning is that of Pierre Prud'hon for Pierre Joseph Bernard's *Phrosine et Mélidor* (figure 7.8), not only for its heavily romantic visual impact but for the symbolic summary it achieves of so much that is contained in the brief story, itself pretty much a permutation of the Hero and Leander legend. In the first place, the story itself includes the incestuous love of Phrosine's brother, who tries to rape her at knifepoint. She, like Leander, swims to rejoin her lover, who lives as a hermit on the island to which he guides her by a fire at night. It is essential to the drama of both text and engraving that she be absolutely naked upon arrival:

Un sentiment l'intimide et l'arrête:
En quel état paraîtra-t-elle, ô dieux!
Aux yeux d'un homme; et quel homme! et quels yeux!
Mais son salut impose cette gêne:
L'amour enfin la décide et l'entraîne.
Il sera nuit; cet homme est son amant:
Partez, Phrosine; on peut tout en aimant.
(§7, chant 3)

[One thought made her timid and hesitant: in what a state, oh gods, was she about to appear to a man's eyes! And what a man, and what eyes! But her salvation imposed this discomfort: love finally convinced and urged her. It will be nighttime; this man is my lover: go, Phrosine; with love one can do anything.]

It is equally essential that she be, though hardly an unwilling victim, unconscious at this critically dramatic moment:

L'objet s'approche, et lui se précipite,
L'atteint, l'enlève au fatal élément.
Ah! quel fardeau pour les bras d'un amant!
Quel coup, ô ciel! quelle scène inouïe!
Mais sa Phrosine était évanouie;
Trop de frayeur, de fatigue et d'efforts,
Avaient, hélas! épuisé ses ressorts,
Quand son amant, par cent baisers de flamme,

Rouvrir ses yeux, ressuscite son âme,
Rouvrir ses yeux, pleins d'un charme nouveau,
Voile son corps des plis de son manteau.

(§7, chant 4)

[The object approached, and he hastened to it, lifting it out of the dread element. Ah, what a burden for the arms of a lover! Heaven, what good fortune, what an unbelievable scene! But his Phrosine was in a faint; too much fright, fatigue and effort had, alas, exhausted her strength, when her lover with a hundred enflamed kisses opened her eyes again, revived her soul; opened her eyes filled with a new charm, and covered her body with the folds of his coat.]

This quasi-shipwrecked abandon is also anticipatory, in that it is all but replicated at the end of the story when she is indeed drowned because her vengeful brothers have floated a decoy beacon (*fanal*) on a boat:

Il voit flotter un corps près du rivage:
L'effroi, l'amour, précipitent ses pas
Vers ce jouet de l'onde et du trépas.
Quel coup de foudre! O ciel! c'est son amante
Qu'à ses pieds roule une vague écumante.
C'est elle... Il tombe, immobile, éperdu,
Sur cet objet dans le sable étendu.
C'est elle... Il sort de cette horreur profonde
Pour détester le ciel, la terre et l'onde. . . .
Il perd la voix, et sa bouche éperdue
Dévore encor ces restes précieux.

(§7, chant 4)

[He saw a body floating near the shore: fright and love impelled him toward that plaything of the waves and death. What a lightning bolt! it was his mistress that the foaming sea had rolled at his feet. It was she... He fell down, motionless in despair, over this object stretched out on the sand. It was she... He emerged from this deep horror only to curse heaven, earth and sea. . . . He lost his voice, and his desperate lips continued to devour the precious remains.]

And yet the greater textual paradox is that, as the exordium insists, Phrosine, like Galatea but unlike Venus, *cannot be represented*:

Peindrai-je, ô dieux! sa grâce et ses attraits?
Que l'art fécond forme les plus beaux traits;

7.8 Bernard, *Phrosine
et Mélidor*. Prud'hon/
Anon. (§7).



Qu'il embellisse, exagère, imagine;
Il rend Vénus, et ne rend pas Phrosine.
(§7, chant 1)

[Shall I, oh gods, depict her grace and charms? May fertile art form her most lovely features, beautifying, exaggerating, imagining: it can create Venus, but not Phrosine.]

However commonplace these expressions may be, especially in the favorable comparison of the heroine to a divine model, the distinction is theoretically precise and significant. Venus *can* be represented; one could even say that it is her essence to be represented and that she exists only to the degree that she is represented. As Barthes incisively put it, "beauty cannot be described . . . ; it has no referent; but it has no want of references"—and of these Venus is his first example.⁵

Andromeda

Perseus, who can fly, should find lots of things on earth to marvel at; but in fact all he ever sees is Andromeda chained to her rock. To some extent, the same is true of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century artists, who see

Andromeda in various guises everywhere.⁶ The subject's persistent fascination is attested, too, by the oracle who instructs Psyche's parents, in La Fontaine's *Amours de Psyché et de Cupidon*:

Menez-la sur un roc, au haut d'une montagne,
En des lieux où l'attend le monstre son époux;
Qu'une pompe funèbre en ces lieux l'accompagne,
Car elle doit mourir pour ses soeurs et pour vous.⁷

[Put her on a rock, atop a mountain, in the place where her husband-monster awaits her; may a funeral procession accompany her there, for she must die for her sisters and you.]

As is typical in both art and literature, the story's detail is dealt with somewhat cavalierly in favor of the gist. Here, the *roc* fits, but the *montagne* does not: the monster is supposed to come from the sea. *Le monstre son époux* captures, however, the happy paradox of Andromeda's fate, for in place of the devouring "spouse" will come the rescuing one who will claim her as his own prize.

Sometimes the subject is "Persée délivrant Andromède," as in Pierre Puget's elegant statue of 1684 at the Louvre (in this case the monster is already disposed of), or Picart's magnificent plate in Beaumarchais's *Le temple des Muses* (figure 7.9). At others it is Andromeda herself, along with the menacing sea serpent, as in Martin Claude Monot's statue at the Metropolitan Museum; there, Perseus is only implied, inasmuch as Andromeda is looking upward as for the deliverance that will come from the sky. Now as it happens, in Ovid the vision of Andromeda is introduced through a sculptural metaphor:

As Perseus looked, *he thought her marble, wrought
By sculptor's hand*—or so he would have thought,
But that warm tears were trickling from her eyes,
And in the breeze he saw her tresses rise.⁸

Picart makes of her a bronzish figure (patina is more effectively translated than is whiteness into line engraving), as though he alone among artists recalled that Andromeda was an Ethiopian. He gives her a Rubenesque build (beauty is her most salient attribute); and in depicting an Amour unshackling her feet, he anticipates Ovid's reward for Perseus: "Hymen and Love wave the nuptial torches before them." Though Ovid himself does not particularly underscore Andromeda's nakedness (indeed, it is her face she most wishes to hide), it is an invariable attribute of these images—overdetermined, no doubt, by a previous artistic tradition of her, on the one



7.9 *Perseus delivering Andromeda*. Beaumarchais, *Le temple des Muses*. Picart/Picart (§39: no. 42).

hand, and by a more generalized obsession, on the other, with the bound, helpless, and sacrificial woman. It is coupled here with an heroic violence whose other, unrevealed face is fantasy of slavery and exploitation.⁹

Eisen makes much more of the monumental grandeur of the battle, graphically described by Ovid, and he acknowledges the other spectators who include Andromeda's parents (figure 7. 10). This allusion is contained in a remarkable pictorial audacity consisting of a framing of the background in the very middle of the field of vision, surrounded by the dense and turbulent action of the foreground.¹⁰ Zocchi, oddly enough, seems to bring in Perseus mounted on Pegasus (figure 7. 11), which is hardly the way Ovid has it (Perseus is equipped with his own wings, which in fact get waterlogged during the struggle); probably he is influenced by Ariosto's hippogriff in the story of Rogero and Angelica. The heavens do not share the seas' slight agitation; indeed, the whole upper half of the plate, including the attackers, seems rather static. Both artists depict Andromeda chained only by the wrists and ankles (though Zocchi by only the left wrist and ankle), and Eisen even gives us a stark frontal Andromeda right



7.10 *Perseus and Andromeda*, from Ovid's *Métamorphoses*. Eisen/Le Mire (§63: 2:57).

down to the pubic hair. This may seem surprising, given that art had for centuries stylized the female genitalia, in particular by suppressing pubic hair. Although the irregular form of the shading over the pudenda could be read, in the case of the Eisen engraving, as suggesting a fig leaf, this somewhat strained conjecture depends upon a context of meaning foreign to the subject. The Zocchi illustration is not so frontal, but even in it one can observe on the engraving a distinctly dark triangular shape within the broader shadow cast over the genital area.¹¹

The rescue of Angelica by Rogero (Ruggiero) in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* is so similar to the Andromeda story that we can hardly tell them apart. Doubtless Ariosto was himself basing his episode on the legend in Ovid; the persistent ambiguity of the motif is indeed such that Dominique Ingres's *Roger délivrant Angélique* was thought to have been first intended as Perseus and Andromeda.¹² There is a whole sequence of episodes in cantos 8–11 echoing a parallel kind of sequence. First Angelica, fleeing Roland, is

victimized by a hermit, in whom she has inspired such unwonted lust that he has summoned a demon to trap her into a cove where he can catch up to her (figure 7.12):

The hermit begins to comfort her with some fair and devout speeches, and puts his daring hands, while he speaks, now on her breast, now on her moist cheeks; then more confident he attempts to embrace her, and she indignantly strikes him with one hand on the chest and pushes him back and is all colored with modest red. (Ariosto, trans. Gilbert, 1:107)

She is indeed a captive at her aggressor's mercy, except for one ironic detail, of which the "steed" in the right background provides the metaphorical support: for although the hermit puts her to sleep with a charm and prepares to rape her, he then defaults: "But in the encounter his steed falls, because its weak body does not answer to his desire; it was little fit because its years were too many; and it will do worse the more he vexes it. He tries all ways, all means, but still that lazy nag does not jump" (8:49–50). As a consequence, Angelica instead of being raped by him is soon thereafter discovered and bound by the pirates of Ebuda,¹³ who offer her

7.11 *Perseus and Andromeda*, from Ovid's *Métamorphoses*. Zocchi/Gregori (§64: 1:129). 7.12 Ariosto, *Roland furieux*, canto 8. Moreau/Henriquez (§2: 1:26).



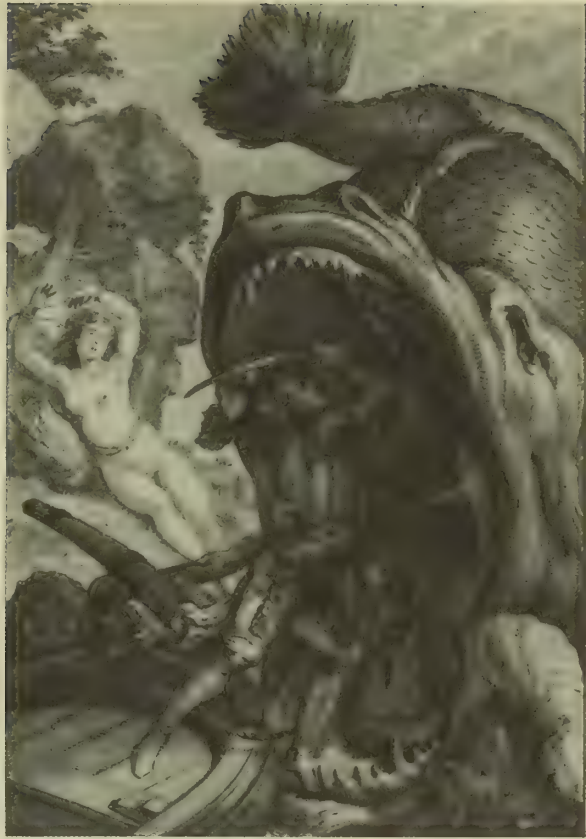
up like Andromeda to the orc; it is then that Rogero spies her from amount his hippogriff. Ariosto stresses her stark nudity ("naked as when Nature first made her") and her striking resemblance to a statue of alabaster or marble (canto 10, stanzas 95–96): in this way she, like Andromeda, is already figured in the text as a work of plastic art before her illustrators reinvent her as such. The plate by Cochin (figure 7.13) skips the battle of Rogero with the orc and instead emphasizes her release, Angelica yet remaining faithfully naked. But when we consider that this story is also the story of an attempted rape,¹⁴ the rescue is deflated into something rather less heroic, and the picture in consequence occupies an ambiguous middle ground between rescue and *enlèvement*.

Perhaps too this should make the immense, gaping orifice of the serpent in a subsequent episode (figure 7.14) take on supplementary connotations, for this same orc swallows up much of the engraving, if not Olympia.

7.13 Ariosto, *Roland furieux*, canto 10.
Cochin/Ponce (§2:
1:161).



7.14 Ariosto, *Roland
furieux*, canto 11.
Cochin/Ponce (§2:
1:182).



Olympia is, like the artists' Andromeda, exposed bare as she was born by the inhabitants of Ebuda, who are so ungrateful when Roland kills the beast (his use of the anchor to jam the creature's mouth is spelled out in the text) that he must kill thirty or so of them in self-defense before he can take time to untie her. The text lavishes great care on Olympia's total and resplendent nakedness:

Olimpia's beauties were of the rarest; and not her forehead alone, her eyes, her cheeks and her hair were beautiful, her mouth, her nose, her shoulders, and her throat; but going down to her breasts, the parts that her robe was wont to cover were of such excellence that they could surpass as many as there were in the world perhaps. [Ariosto, trans. Gilbert, 1: 163]

This belaboring of her raw beauty goes on for four more stanzas, thus apparently consuming enough diegetic time for Oberto king of Hibernia

to lay eyes on her and, smitten, espouse her cause¹⁵—and, at long last, clothe her (figure 7.15). Amidst the confusion, she has not even presumed to move off the rock where she had been chained, and meanwhile she has contorted herself so as to keep her back and sides toward Roland, concealing as best she can “her breast and her belly”—a gesture that is compared not only to the *situation* of Diana under the gaze of Acteon but to its *representation*: “And while she was speaking, she kept twisting herself about in the way Diana in the fountain is *sculptured or painted*, as she throws water in the face of Acteon” (ibid., 1:161, my italics). Such language by thematizing what will become his own act of creation seems once again to attract the illustrator’s attention.

When the chains reappear in canto 34 (figure 7.16), they seem to come mainly from the artist’s imagination. We are following Astolfo with his magic horn into hell, where amidst thick smoke he encounters Lydie. She is being punished by the smoke from hell, along with Daphne and other cruel women who have deceived and tortured men through desire; others more guilty, including men who have done the same to women, are closer

7.15 Ariosto, *Roland furieux*, canto 11.
Cipriani/Bartolozzi
(§2: 1:197).





7.16 Ariosto, *Roland furieux*, canto 34. Cochin/Ponce (§2: 3:254).

to the flames. Nowhere does the text say that these spirits are doing anything but hovering, though they are *compared* to corpses hanging in the wind (34:7); indeed Astolfo's sight is so obscured by smoke that he cannot make them out and must probe with his sword. The artist has preferred to let us perceive clearly what is going on. Viewed independently, this could pass for an illustration of something out of Baculard d'Arnaud or even Sade. That suggests that the artist has given it a somewhat different tone from Ariosto's text, which is a parody of Dante. Lydie's faintly suggested genitalia are a slight transgression of the rules of decency, to which we shall return in the next chapter.

The Stake

If not the rock, then the stake; no more pathetic image is possible, leaving aside sea monsters and other supernatural creatures, of feminine vulnerability. There are some wonderfully intriguing variations on this type of subject, not aligned in any clear linear progression, and stemming from several literary sources. There are at least four such by Gravelot, all ostensibly concerned with different texts.

The first, an early illustration for John Dryden's *Amboyna, or the Cruelties of the Dutch to the English Merchants*, not quite so evidently dramatic at first glance as a burning at the stake, nonetheless treats the highly pathetic and violent aftermath of the rape of Ysabinda by Harman Junior, here being discovered and freed by her fiancé Towerson (figure 7.17).¹⁶ She laments their tragedy, which will in fact lead to Towerson's death:

No longer bridegroom thou, nor I a bride;
 Those names are vanished; love is now no more;
 Look on me as thou would'st on some foul leper;
 And do not touch me; I am all polluted,
 All shame, all o'er dishonour; fly my sight.
 (§29: 3: act 4, scene 3)

Although Gravelot, who neglects the fact that she was gagged, suggests the violence done her by such details as her torn stocking and displaced corset, he has at the same time so stylized her as a comely European (she is an Indian) that it is hard to think Dryden would have felt the spirit of his ferociously anti-Dutch play of 1673 had been adequately caught.

The second, from Boccaccio, seems to follow the specifics of the text in representing the two lovers Gianni and Restituta together at the stake (figure 7.18):



7.17 Dryden, *Amboyna*. Gravelot/Van der Gucht (§29: 3: act 4, scene 3).

The King left the room and ordered that the two lovers, naked as they were, should be seized and tied up, and when daybreak came, taken to the square in Palermo and, back to back, bound to a stake, where they were to be held until the hour of tierce, so that they could be viewed by everyone; and then they were to be burned at the stake as they deserved.¹⁷

It makes it appear that the fire is about to be lit when Ruggier de Loria recognizes Gianni and intervenes to save them. The illustration, however, overlooks the textual symmetry of attractiveness:

All the people of Palermo, both men and women, immediately rushed to see the two lovers: while the men stood in a group gazing at the girl,

all of them praising the beauty of all her parts and how well-built she was, so in like manner, all the women, who had raced to look at the young man, were expressing their highest approval for his good looks and good body. (id)

The reason why this balance of sexual fascination disappears in illustration is arguably that the artist and his public are interested only in Restituta, almost all of whose parts are therefore held up to the viewer's admiration; whereas Gianni is facing away in such a way that Ruggier, but not the viewer, can see him.

For Voltaire's *La pucelle d'Orléans*, Gravelot depicts the twenty-year-old Dorothée, "nue en chemise," about to be burned as a heretic in Milan for refusing to give in to her uncle the archbishop, here shown on his balcony as Dunois listens to her story (figure 7. 19):

A Dorothée alors le beau Dunois
S'en vint parler d'un air noble et courtois.
Les yeux baissés la belle lui raconte,
En soupirant son malheur et sa honte.
L'âne divin, sur l'église perché,
De tout ce cas paraissait fort touché. . . .
(Voltaire 1970: 376)

[The knight, with courteous mien and bending low,
The maid approached, to hear her tale of woe;
Yet soft, my reader, while she thus proclaimed
The dire mishap of which she felt ashamed,
Our ass divine judged meet his form to perch,
And view the scene from steeple of the church
(Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 40:212)]

Other scenes in the canto might equally well have invited illustration: Gravelot might, for example, have illustrated the prelate's attempted rape, or the less tendentious but more dramatic moment when he caught her reading a letter from her lover La Trimouille. But as this series of similar illustrations suggests, the stake seems self-imposed. Gravelot packs a lot of detail into the engraving, including Voltaire's ever-present flying ass, a parody of the hippogriff in Ariosto, but on another level probably a mockery of Balaam's talking ass in the Bible; but he makes less of Dorothée's sexuality than he did of Restituta's.

His plate for canto 2 of Tasso's *Jérusalem délivrée* is somewhere between



7. 18 Boccaccio, *Le Décaméron* (fifth day, sixth tale). Gravelot/Pasquier (§13: 3:67).

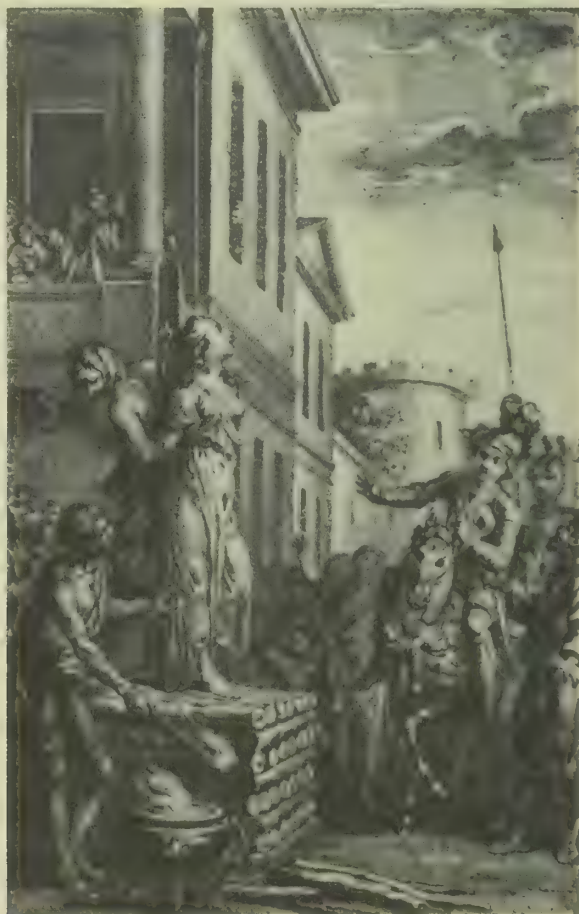
7. 19 Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 7. [Gravelot]/Anon. (§86: 125).

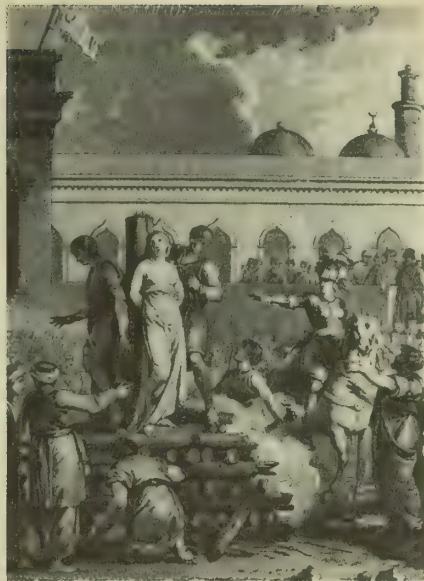
these two just mentioned (figure 7.20). Olinde and Sophronie, another pair of lovers, but chaste in this case and rivals for the richer heavenly reward, are attached almost exactly like Gianni and Restituta, but Sophronie again of the two provides the only visual interest; according to the text, she is considerably exposed: “Déjà son voile, déjà ses chastes vêtements lui sont arrachés” [Already her veil, her chaste vestments are torn away] (§78: canto 2). The fire is already lit as Clorinda rides up to intercede for them; in the *engraving* she is once more identified as a woman by her breastplate, though she is recognized in the *story* only by the tiger on her helmet, not identifiable here. Olinde’s words, by the way, encode a potent sexual connotation in the martyric fire, as he cries to the loved one he cannot see: “Les voilà donc ces liens qui devaient unir ma vie à la tienne? Le voilà ce feu qui devait embraser nos âmes d’une égale ardeur? . . . O mort trop heureuse en effet, supplice délicieux! si ma bouche collée à ta bouche pouvait avec mon dernier soupir, te donner mon âme et recevoir la tienne!” (§78: 1:49–50)

[Be these the bonds? Is this the hoped-for day,
 Should join me to this long désiréd dame? . . .
 Yet happy were my death, mine ending blest,
 My torments easy, full of sweet delight,
 If this I could obtain, that breast to breast
 Thy bosom might receive my yielded sprite;
 And thine with it in heaven's pure clothing drest,
 Through clearest skies might take united flight.
 (Tasso, trans. Fairfax, 59)]

In keeping with his more deliberately ambiguous handling of the identity of Clorinda, mentioned in chapter 4, Cochin's version of this scene (§77: 1:35) places her in such a way that one arm crosses her breastplate and

7.20 Tasso, *Jérusalem délivrée*, canto 2. Gravelot/Duclos (§78: 1:35).





7.21 "Of one the *sternum* and the arm he hit, / Another pierced where *Atlas* bone is knit." Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 7. Monsiau/Delignon (§88: 1:119).

7.22 "If they die, then my prayers or my arms are unavailing." Tasso, *Jérusalem délivrée*, canto 2. Le Barbier/Delignon (§80: 1:37).

hides it from view. In contrast to these, a plate by Nicolas André Monsiau for Voltaire's *La pucelle d'Orléans* in true parodic fashion features the mangy ass rather more than Dorothee, at the moment not of her story but of Dunois's rescue (figure 7.21); and one by Le Barbier for *Jérusalem délivrée* retains the essential features of Gravelot's, with even less interest being reserved for Olinde (figure 7.22). A little oriental flavor has been added in this last example: the semblance of a minaret and small cupolas with crescents atop an unusual (but still basically gothic) cathedral/mosque, men in turbans.

Similarly, there is an illustration for the thirty-third story of Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*, in which a priest and his sister are burned for incest (figure 7.23). The text for this scene consists of a single sentence:

L'on attendit que sa soeur fût accouchée; et, après avoir fait un beau fils, furent brûlés le frère et la soeur ensemble, dont tout le peuple eut un merveilleux ébahissement, ayant vu sous si saint manteau un monstre si horrible, et sous une vie tant louable et sainte régner un si détestable vice.¹⁸ (§52: 2:171)



7.23 Marguerite de Navarre, *Heptaméron*, 33rd tale. Freudeberg/Le Roy (§52: 2:171).

{So they waited till the girl was brought to bed, and after that she was delivered of a boy, the brother and sister were burned alive together, whereat all the people marvelled greatly, who had seen under the cloak of holiness so monstrous a deed, and under so pious and praiseworthy a life a most hateful crime. (Marguerite de Navarre, trans. Machen, 223)}

The only remarkable thing about this illustration is that on the basis of so little textual pretext it makes of her exposed bust the central focus; but it is just for that reason that it supports so strongly the thesis being argued here which calls for an erotic exploitation of the vulnerable woman. There would be a rationale for their both being stripped, thus inflicting shame on the private parts by which they sinned, but in that case the priest himself should hardly be exempt, as he is in the picture.

Narrow escapes are the specialty of *La pucelle d'Orléans*, in part because Jeanne is herself so invitingly and casually sensual. The fourth canto is illustrated by Moreau at the point where Jeanne and Dunois, thanks to

Jeanne's insistent defense of her nationally vital virginity, are condemned to an awful death by Hermaphrodix (figure 7.24):

Le beau bâtard est garrotté tout nu
Pour être assis sur un bâton pointu.
Au même instant une troupe profane
Mène au poteau la belle et fière Jeanne,
Et ses soufflets ainsi que ses appas,
Seront punis par un affreux trépas.
De sa chemise aussitôt dépouillée,
De coups de fouet en passant flagellée,
Elle est livrée aux cruels empaleurs.

(Voltaire 1970: 336–37)

[Naked and bound the Bastard then they take,
Straight to be placed upon a pointed stake;
And at this juncture, by a troop profane,
To scaffold, fierce and lovely Joan is ta'en.
When graces all and boxes of the ear

7.24 “On Dunois languidly she cast her eye, / For him alone her bosom heaved the sigh.” Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 4. Moreau/Halbou (§85: 11:79).



Must punished be, by lingering death severe.
From Joan's fair form the lily shift they tore,
And, as she passed, her lovely body bore
Stripes from the rods of her infernal jailors,
Who then consigned her to the fierce empalers.
(Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 40:151–52)}

For the artist, as for Voltaire, the passage becomes the opportunity to present Jeanne's sumptuous flesh to the reader's view and imagination. But there is still more, for her langorous glance at Dunois betrays not only despair but desire, as the protagonists, too, take advantage of the opportunity to gape at each other's nakedness before they are, as usual, saved by miraculous intervention:

Mais quand Dunois eut vu son héroïne,
Des fleurs de lis vengeresse divine,
Prête à subir cette effroyable mort,
Il déplora l'inconstance du sort.
De la pucelle il parcourait les charmes,
Et regardant les funestes apprêts
De ce trépas, il répandit des larmes
Que pour lui-même il ne versa jamais.
Non moins superbe et non moins charitable,
Jeanne aux frayeurs toujours impénétrable,
Languissamment le beau bâtard lorgnait,
Et pour lui seul son grand coeur gémissait.
Leur nudité, leur beauté, leur jeunesse
En dépit d'eux réveillaient leur tendresse.
(Voltaire 1970: 337)

{And as on Joan the Bastard cast his eye,
Guardian of France, beloved of saints on high,
When the protectress of Gaul's pallid flower
He saw condemned to perish in the hour,
Inconstant fate, his bosom's throbs deplore
The charms of Joan he gazed on o'er and o'er;
Beholding too the apparatus dread,
For Joan he shuddering wept and hung his head;
Such tears he for himself disdained to shed.

Equal in charity and just as proud,
Attacks of fear our maiden ne'er allowed,



7.25 "Stop, he cried, stop, you inhuman barbarians." Marchand, *Boca*. Marillier/De Ghendt (§53: no. 54).

On Dunois languidly she cast her eye,
 For him alone her bosom heaved the sigh;
 Beauty, grace, nudity woke pity's ray,
 And spite of courage, tenderness held sway.
 (Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 40:152)}

This text, like the one from Boccaccio quoted earlier, thematizes in a symmetrical way the act of viewing, which the illustration's public consumes asymmetrically, because as usual it is the female whose beauty is featured.

The heroine of the engraving for Françoise Le Marchand's *Boca* is saved, too, by a miracle, though the intervention may be her own (figure 7.25).¹⁹ Boca for his journey has been given ambiguous instructions: never to stop, but to "be human," as he passes through a forest full of supernatural temptations. Hearing cries,

il vit une femme que deux hommes achevaient de lier à un arbre. Alors un mouvement de pitié plus fort que la crainte, lui faisant oublier qu'il était sans armes et sans défense, il courut à elle avec ardeur; et voyant que les cruels tiraient tous deux leurs sabres pour frapper cette infortunée: Arrêtez, leur cria-t-il, arrêtez, barbares, inhumains. (pp. 355–56)

[he saw a woman whom two men were tying to a tree. Then an impulse of pity stronger than fear caused him to forget that he was without arms or defense, and he rushed passionately to her; and seeing that the aggressors both drew their sabers to strike the unfortunate woman: Stop, he cried, stop, you inhuman barbarians.]

Their blows are frozen in mid-air, which makes him wonder what kind of temptation her plight actually represented: was he supposed to resist the urge to help and continue on his way, or “be human” and try to rescue her? The polyvalence of the story line is paralleled by its symbolic uncertainty; both as plot element and as psychological or sociological signified, it cannot speak unambiguously to the question of its own meaning. Visually, however, the artist has found no way to suggest this complexity.

Although all of the subjects I have been conflating here in various ways symbolize rape, there is an instance in Tasso's *Aminta* where rape is the literal purpose: the Satyr has surprised Sylvie at her bath—where Aminta himself hoped to catch her—and tied her up to serve his pleasure. Around 1755 Boucher painted a series of scenes from *Aminta*, one of which is *Sylvie délivrée par Aminte*:²⁰ a rather undistressed and undisheveled Sylvie, on a bed of soft silks, is being gently untied, and the unpleasant Satyr is left out of the story. No sign of a struggle, nor certainly of Sylvie's attempt according to Tasso to hide her nakedness from him:

Nulla rispose,
ma disdegnosa e vergognosa a terra
chinava il viso, e 'l delicato seno
quanto potea torcendosi celava.

[Disdain, and Shame, all o're her Face was spread,
Down low to Earth she strove to bow her Head,
And bending forward her Desire confest,
If possible to hide, or shade her Breast.]²¹

In short, she is a typical Boucher *bergère*, and one would hardly guess that she is about to flee Aminta out of pure shame (an act that Tirsi describes as ungrateful). In an illustration by Prud'hon,²² however, the intentions of the Satyr are prominent; Sylvie is tied to a tree, “ignuda come nacque,” and



7.26 Restif de la Bre-
tonne, *La paysanne
pervertie*. Binet/Le Roy
(§70: 4:18).

he seems about to plunge into her elegant body when Aminta and Tirsi fall upon him to save her.²³

The gothic novel or *roman noir*, so common later in the century, dwells with particular complaisance upon the theme of the imprisoned woman. There cruelty is indulged for its own sake, or, to put it another way, the concept of violent sexual gratification is extended to include persecution.²⁴ Restif's fiction usually deals with forms of cruelty short of slavery, but some scenes exploit its pleasures, as in the whipping of Ursule as depicted by Binet (figure 7.26):

Un jour que je diffèrai un peu à ouvrir . . . j'ai été mise aux crampons, malgré mes excuses, et j'ai reçu, par l'ordre de l'Italien, qui malheureusement venait d'arriver, vingt coups de nerf de boeuf, des mains du domestique de la G**, en présence de cette femme: elle a paru me plaindre; mon bourreau lui-même détournait la vue: mais je n'en ai pas

moins perdu la moitié d'une confiance acquise avec des peines qui font frémir. (§70: part 7, letter 129)

[One day when I was a bit slow in opening the door . . . I was attached, despite my apologies, to the spikes in the wall, and by order of the Italian received twenty whiplashes at the hands of de la G**'s servant, in her presence. She appeared to pity me; my torturer himself turned his eyes aside; but I nonetheless lost half of the confidence I had gained at a price that would make you shudder.]

In fact, in this instance the illustration plays down violence in favor of elegance; Ursule's pretty back looks quite intact, the better to attract by its beauty and that of her bust. As so frequently in Restif, there is despite the horror an emphasis on the *joli*. Another example of its juxtaposition with even more ghoulish violence is the story in Restif's *Les contemporaines*

7.27 "What have you done, you dreadful wretch!" Restif de la Bretonne, "La malédiction." Binet/Le Roy (§68: 10:488).



where the *sujet de l'estampe* notice reads: "Une jeune dame étendue sur la paille dans une cave, enchaînée, ses jambes dans les ceps, et menacée par un furieux, qui lui tient un poignard sur le sein, tandis que deux valets accrochent à la voûte un cadavre défiguré" [A young lady lying on straw in a cave, her legs tied, and threatened by a madman holding a dagger against her breast, while two valets are hanging a disfigured body from the ceiling (§68: 10:488)] (figure 7.27). Shortly thereafter, Victoire de Moréal will be discovered "enchaînée, nue, évanouie" [naked, in chains, and unconscious], by her father and brother. Nudity is an essential component of the cruelty in most such representations because it humiliates the woman by exposing her to the eyes, and at all times at least potentially to the desires, of the captor—whose exploitation is mirrored in the gaze of the reader.²⁵

All of the motifs considered here are, in varying degrees of subtlety, sublimations of raw sexuality and displacements of masculine power to subject the female to his pleasures. As such, they can be assumed to serve at once a psychic and a social function. On the level of the individual consumer of the artifact, they transpose prurient interest and thereby indulge vicarious fantasies without triggering the intervention of the internalized "censor." In this context, the object to which the woman is bound—pillar, rock, or stake—may with little difficulty be understood as representing an unconscious fetishization, or penis substitution, whereby the threateningly unphallic Other is metonymically normalized for the viewer's reassuring consumption.²⁶ Publicly, such forms render commercially tolerable—a determination made officially by the state censor—ideas that in a cruder state would be banned as a violation of public decorum. Neither of these explanations is more than schematic, however, for a great deal of cheating always occurs. Many a viewer can afford, for either psychological or societal reasons, to be cynical about such supervisory authority. It is the overdetermination of their appeal, the fact that they operate in multiple ways and are viable whether or not the respective censors are presumably "fooled," that accounts for the demand for such types of illustration.

Full justice cannot be done the subject as a whole, however, without considering the ways in which these variously mitigated transgressions relate, across the nominally forbidden lines separating decency from indecency, to more explicit permutations of the same and similar themes: this subject will now be explored in somewhat more detail.

8 *Decency and Indecency*

Although it would be a mistake to think of the æsthetic as somehow opposed to the erotic, most illustrations, like most paintings, handle the erotic in subdued, witty, or covert ways whose effect is to entertain the intellect as much as to arouse sexual fantasy. The essence of decency is to respect this sense of control. But the ways in which decency shades off into indecency can be quite difficult to specify; it goes without saying that the boundary between them is forever a matter of contention rather than a really clear delineation. And even indecency, though it sacrifices something in subtlety, may well retain an element of humor or even comedy. Pornography (however defined, and even allowing for variation in the form of its historical manifestations) flourished in the eighteenth century, as did pornographic illustration, although plates of this type are for the most part (despite notable exceptions) lacking in both finesse and sophistication. Nonpornographic work of highly suggestive content, however, sometimes by the best artists, may play provocatively along the variably flexible borderline of what is permissible. Thus, it is not merely a problem of historical distance, of our efforts to reconstruct the precise eighteenth-century parameters of decency; for even today the official representatives of public order are frequently challenged by purveyors of that which might be construed as obscene, and a test ensues, often in the courts, of whether it is or not. Since it is in the nature of such distinctions to be always somewhat imprecise, always contestable, what we come to appreciate instead of mere historical difference is the persistence over time of the dynamics by which the criteria are uncertainly determined.

My purpose in this chapter, accordingly, is not to draw a simple distinction, as if transgression begins at some particular point or one could reliably categorize the examples falling on the benign or unsavory side of the divide. One fairly consistent trait of illicit engravings is that they are

not signed by their artists; but since that occurs also in the case of perfectly innocuous ones, anonymity is not alone a reliable indication of which works were felt, whether by artist or publisher, to entail more risk. One has to take note of various factors that may have conditioned the way an individual plate was perceived: where the book was published, and what was its legal status; what is known of the plate's history, if anything; the publisher's and artists' motives; and so forth. Sets of plates that were sold secretly and only to select subscribers—as in certain well-documented cases—are a foolproof sign that someone is circumventing moral control of content, but these circumstances are exceptional. Most of the more ambiguous examples are ones that, though not representing an overt affront to official standards, take small but daring liberties with the conventions that more or less maintain the sense of decency in subjects with carnal implications. What rules that can be identified with reasonable confidence or documentation are mentioned as we go, but they do not necessarily add up to a really consistent standard: being a censor always was perilous precisely because, although an error could have terrible social or legal consequences, the burden of authorizing production or not depended upon one's own fallible judgment.

In this game the interplay between image and text is once more critical, for it is entirely possible to represent a decent story suggestively, and certainly the indecent story (at least as defined by official, Christian mores) is often illustrated decently. The possible ambiguities are particularly well exploited in the use of symbols that can be predominantly, but are not necessarily, sexual in connotation. A rose can be either a relatively vague erotic hint, on the one hand, or a more specific, still partially coy allusion to sexual intercourse on the other, as it is in Boilly's before-and-after dyp-tique, *La dispute de la rose* and *La rose prise*: in the first frame, a young man is trying to snatch a rose that his love is holding away from him, and in the second he has the rose and she a knowing smile.¹ The same is true of the bird let out of its cage (or even still in it) so common in subjects of the Boucher idiom. The context determines the degree of suggestion; in the case of Boilly's painting *Le couple et l'oiseau envolé* at the Louvre, the characters' various unlaced articles of clothing make it a categorically "after" subject.

One of the cardinal rules of decency, of course, is that although sex can be alluded to (indeed, many of the most canonical historical or mythological subjects turn on sexual encounters), the characters are always shown *before* or *after* and never *during*. It is usually before, although there are refined ways of presenting an "after" scene, such as Jupiter leaving the



8. 1 "She replied, with a blush: At least you are all right." *Le Barbier/ Née* (§40: 4:44).

bed of Antiope or Danaë, or Daphnis quitting Chloe. The Greek gods were nothing if not sexually active, and recognition of this fact was in no way excluded from the range of permissible representation, provided certain stylizations were adhered to. Decency is a code not of disguise but of euphemism, of respect for appearances; it is, to adapt Sébastien Chamfort's maxim about hypocrisy, the homage vice pays to virtue. A typically acceptable "after" illustration is one by Le Barbier to an equivocal song entitled "Les douces blessures" (figure 8. 1):

L'Amour caché dans un buisson
Vit Colin et Nanette
Tout aussitôt ce dieu fripon
Jouant de l'arbalète
Perça la fille et le garçon
Tous les deux sur l'herbette.

Fier de ce coup il s'approcha
Du couple qui se pâme;
Mais ce spectacle le toucha,

Et par un trait de flamme
 Qu'avec roideur il décocha,
 Ce dieu leur rendit l'âme.

Colin le premier s'éveillant
 Joyeux de l'aventure,
 Dit à Nanette, en l'embrassant,
 Comment va ta blessure?
 Elle répond, en rougissant,
 Ta santé me rassure.

(§40: 4:44)

[Cupid, hiding in a bush, spied Colin and Nanette; wherewith the mischievous god with his crossbow shot the boy and girl through as they lay in the grass. Proud of himself, he approached the exhausted couple, but the sight moved him to bring them back to life with a flaming dart firmly fired. Colin, coming to first and thrilled with the experience, said

8.2 Voltaire, *La princesse de Babylone*. Monnet/Dambrun (§89: 1:247).



to Nanette, embracing her: How is your wound? She replied, with a blush: At least you are all right.]

The lovers' clothing is scarcely ruffled; the visual impression would be almost platonic were it not for the support of the verse itself, particularly its equation of Cupid's arrows with the infliction of a wound that is quasi-physical in nature and not merely a sentimental metaphor.

We find many kinds of bed scenes where the presence of a still slumbering couple is an obvious allusion to their previous, exhausting activity; such is the case in Monnet's illustration for Voltaire's *La princesse de Babylone* (figure 8.2), in which the princess Formosante, having finally caught up with her beloved Amazan after a worldwide pursuit, rushing (accompanied by her phoenix) into his room, is appalled to discover him in the arms of a *fille d'opéra*:

Elle se fit conduire à son hôtel; elle entra, le coeur palpitant d'amour: toute son âme était pénétrée de l'inexprimable joie de revoir enfin dans son amant le modèle de la constance. Rien ne put l'empêcher d'entrer dans sa chambre; les rideaux étaient ouverts; elle vit le bel Amazan dormant entre les bras d'une jolie brune. Ils avaient tous deux un très grand besoin de repos.

Formosante jeta un cri de douleur qui retentit dans toute la maison, mais qui ne put éveiller ni son cousin ni la fille *d'affaire*. Elle tomba pâmée entre les bras d'Irla. (chap. 10)²

[She was escorted to his *hotel*. —How her heart was pounding! the powerful operation of the tender passion; her whole soul was penetrated with inexpressible joy, to see once more in her lover the model of constancy. Nothing could keep her from entering his chamber; the curtains were open; and she saw the beautiful Amazan sleeping in the arms of a handsome *brunette*. They were both in great need of rest. Formosanta expressed her grief with screams echoed through the house, but could neither wake her cousin nor the *business* girl. She swooned into the arms of Irla.]³

In terms of the public norms, the way that Amazan's thigh is looped over the girl comes closer to indecency than his hand on her breast. There is no evident rationalization, on the other hand, for Formosante's *own* breast being exposed as it is; perhaps it is to suggest how ready she now is to deliver herself to him. The story later in fact duplicates this terrible shock to Formosante when Amazan in turn finds her in the bed of the king of Ethiopia. A still more explicit gesture is that of Martinguerre, whose hand

hangs limply in Judith's crotch in canto 9 of Voltaire's *La pucelle* (figure 8.3); but like her biblical homonym, Judith is about to take advantage of her partner's sated stupor to behead him:

Le dissolu lassé d'un tel effort,
Bâille un moment, tourne la tête et dort.
A son chevet pendait le cimenterre
Qui fit longtemps redouter Martinguerre;
Notre Bretonne aussitôt le tira,
En invoquant Judith et Débora, . . .
Puis empoignant les crins de l'animal
De sa main gauche, et soulevant la tête,
La tete lourde et le front engourdi
Du mécréant qui ronfle appesanti,
Elle s'ajuste, et sa droite élevée
Tranche le cou du brave débauché.
(Voltaire 1970: 408–9)

[Subdued at length, by Morpheus' fetter bound,
He gaping turns, and sinks in sleep profound.
Pendant was seen o'er pillow of the bed,
The robber's sword, so oft inspiring dread,
Which Rosamore from scabbard promptly drew,
Namesake invoking and her saintly crew;
Judith, fair Deborah, with Aod famed, . . .
With left hand clasping hair of brutal head,
That pond'rous skull incasing nought but lead,
Sconce of vile miscreant, who snoring brays,
While she, in right hand grasped, the sword displays,
Which falling, ends the bandit's sensual glow,
His neck departing at one fateful blow.
(Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 40:267–68)]

In both examples, the bedcurtains have conveniently been left open; it is more logical that they be closed (though Voltaire's text specifies that they remain open), but in neither case would dramatic visualization then be easily imaginable: like the theater, illustration supposes a sort of invisible wall, but one that does not function satisfactorily at very close range (that is, within an enclosure such as an alcove). For the Caylus translation of *Tiran le blanc*, Marillier opens the curtains (via the hand of the queen of Fez) to expose the lovers to view (figure 8.4):



8.3 Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 9.
Anon. (§88: 1:141).

La reine voyant que le jour approchait, pensa aux précautions qui n'occupent guère les amants. Elle se leva et vint leur souhaiter le bonjour après une nuit qui avait été si bonne. Ils badinaient ensemble et paraissaient fort contents l'un de l'autre. La reine dit à Tiran: Souverain de l'empire grec, il est temps de vous lever, voilà le jour qui paraît, il faut sortir sans que personne vous aperçoive. (§15: 2:365)

[Seeing that day was approaching, the queen took thought to precautions that lovers forget to attend to. She arose and came to wish them a good day after such a good night. They were bantering, and seemed very satisfied with each other. The queen said to Tiran: Sovereign of the Greek empire, it is time to rise; the day is breaking, and you must leave without being seen.]

For it is she, the officious facilitator, who has arranged in her very own room—where she, too, slept—this first consummation between Tiran and

8.4 "Sovereign of the Greek empire, it is time to rise; the day is breaking." Caylus, *Tiran le blanc*. Marillier/de Launay (§15: 2:365).



Princess Carmésine, his fiancée. The sexual content of the illustration is attenuated by the choice of a subsequent, relaxed moment ("ils badinaient") rather than one where they are in the throes of passion.

Someone got the idea of letting the feet say it all. It was not completely novel, of course, because erotic fascination with the foot is to be found earlier: witness the ecstatic description of Clymène's by Acante—in preference to the rest of her, which is equally exposed to his view—in La Fontaine's *Clymène*:

Ce matin j'ai trouvé Clymène dans le lit.
Sire, jusqu'à demain je n'aurais pas décrit
Ses diverses beautés. . . .

Le sort à mes regards a mis encore en proie
Les merveilles d'un pied sans mentir fait au tour.
Figurez-vous le pied de la mère d'Amour

Lorsqu'allant des Tritons attirer les oeillades
 Il dispute du prix avec ceux des Nâïades.
 Vous pouvez l'avoir vu; Mars peut vous l'avoir dit:
 Quant à moi, j'ai vu, Sire, au pied dont il s'agit
 Du marbre, de l'albâtre, une plante vermeille:
 Thétis l'a, que je pense, ou doit l'avoir pareille.
 Quoi qu'il en soit ce pied hors des draps échappé
 M'a tenu fort longtemps à le voir occupé.
 (La Fontaine 1980: 286)

[This morning I found Clymène in bed. Sire, by tomorrow I could not finish describing her many beauties. . . . Luck also exposed to my view the marvels of a finely-turned foot. Imagine the foot of Cupid's mother when, going to attract the Tritons' gaze, she placed it in the balance with the Nâïads'. Perhaps you saw it; Mars might have told you. As for me, Sire, I saw in that foot marble, alabaster, a rosy sole. Thétis, I suppose, must have one such. However it may be, this foot that appeared from under the covers held my attention for a long time.]

To the Regent's series of illustrations (1718) for Longus's *Daphnis et Chloé* was added, in the same style as his, a much-copied plate (figure 8.5) widely known as "les petits pieds," corresponding to the following passage:

Lycène, who did not expect to find the shepherd so well disposed to listen, lost no time in tutoring him. First she told him to come as close to her as possible, and told him to kiss her as lovingly as he usually did Chloë, to hold her tightly, and to roll over on his side with her. Daphnis came close to her, repeated his kisses with as much eagerness as if he were holding his shepherdess, and leaned over gently on his side, holding Lycène tightly. Lycène took note that her advances were not in vain. With a simple half-turn, she put the shepherd on top of her, and guided him to the path of pleasure he had been so long seeking. Once there, Lycène had no more to teach him. The wise mistress Nature showed him the rest. (§48: 163, my trans.)

Thus, and this is part of the humor, the feminine pair of feet belongs not to Chloë, as one might have expected, but to the more worldly Lycène, who takes it upon herself to teach Daphnis a few things about pastoral life—from which Chloë can later benefit. The dog (a hunting dog in this instance, since a lapdog would hardly fit the pastoral setting) shares vicariously in the excitement, as is frequently the case. Feet and bedcurtains are combined in another version of the same topos (figure 8.6)⁴ where putti

- 8.5 Longus, *Les amours pastorales de Daphnis et de Chloé*. Anon. (§48: 162).
 8.6 Longus, *Les amours pastorales de Daphnis et de Chloé*. Anon. (n.p., 1745).
 8.7 Crébillon, *La nuit et le moment*. Anon. (§17: 183).



or “petits Amours” serve the same essential echo function as the dog, with the addition of the teasing and voyeuristic connotations of the act of *peeking in*. This grotto is as artificial as can be imagined, outfitted not only with a somewhat suggestive painting or hanging on the wall but with the bed-curtains themselves. This sort of scene is crudely imitated in an illustration to Crébillon’s *La nuit et le moment* (figure 8.7), but in a proper bedroom and with the usual small dog attendant, here seemingly observing with an air of detached curiosity.

The provocative element is added by the fact that curtains are supposed to be closed, as they are in the cover vignette of Diderot’s *Les bijoux indiscrets* (figure 8.8), precisely by way of alluding to what is going on inside, further pointed up by the shoes deposited outside (three are visible, two of them identifiably feminine, with their high heels and pointed toes).⁵ Dorat spun a whole little tale around the suggestive metonymy of shoes standing for people—the headpiece puts the sensuous human bodies right up front (figure 8.9)—and called it “La mule et la pantoufle du mufti”:

Une mule bien élégante,
 Faite exprès pour un pied chinois,
 Près d’une pantoufle imposante,
 Déraisonnait; oh! je le crois:
 Qu’importe? Elle était amusante.
 Où donc, lui dit-elle gaîment,



Ai-je vu ta grave éminence?
J'ai de toi, je ne sais comment,
Quelque vague réminiscence. —

Je chaussais jadis un mufti. —
Oh! ta mémoire aide la mienne;
Je chaussais une Circassienne
Dont le pied était fort joli;
Et j'en suis la preuve certaine.
Ce mufti-là, je m'en souviens,
Trois ou quatre fois par semaine,
Avait de très vifs entretiens
Avec sa douce anti-chrétienne.
Sauf le respect de Mahomet,
Il venait souper avec elle,
Et mettrait aux pieds de la belle
Son coeur, sa pipe et son bonnet:
Voilà, selon toute apparence,
L'époque de la connaissance.

Oui, oui, je le croirais assez:
Plus d'étiquette, allons de compagnie;
Le sacré brodequin, et la mule étourdie,
Se sont souvent entrelassés.⁶

[An elegant mule, made just so for a Chinese foot, was acting foolish with an imposing slipper: that's my opinion, but so what? she was amusing. Where, she said airily, have I seen your grave eminence before? I vaguely remember you, but I'm not sure why. I once, he said, shoed a mufti's foot. —Ah yes, she said, your memory aids mine: for I shoed a Circassian lady with a lovely foot; I myself am proof of that. Three or four times a week, I remember, your mufti had lively conversations with his gentle anti-Christian lady. Mohammed forbid, he came to sup with her and lay at her feet his heart, pipe and turban: it was then, quite likely, that I knew you. Yes, I do think so, he said. Now let's get along without ceremony. The holy slipper and the lightheaded mule had many an embrace.]

Entrelasser is a pun, a conflation of *s'entrelacer* (a vigorous metaphor for 'embrace'), *lacet* 'shoelace' (the one means whereby shoes might embrace), and *lasser* 'to tire out.' The tailpiece by the same artists (figure 8.10) is a further variant on the idea of pairing. The shoe on the floor in many an engraving can thus be seen as a double allusion, first via the erotic exposure of the naked foot, and also through the indication of general disorder or partial undressing that is in process or has just taken place.

The matter of sexual allusion, and its frequent association with humor, has not been adequately understood until the symbolic role of animals has been taken into account. There are all kinds of scenes, in both painting⁷ and engraving, typical incarnations of many of the themes already dis-



8.8 Diderot, *Les bijoux indiscrets*, title page vignette. Anon. (§18).



8.9 Dorat, "La mule et la pantoufle du mufti," headpiece. Marillier/Née (§23: 39).

cussed in this book, where an animal (usually a dog) plays a significant connotative role. The collaborative pet is no guard dog: that figure, inherently unfriendly to the virile intruder, is totally out of fashion. His newer replacement may continue in some ways to symbolize fidelity but is of no use for hunting or serious defense; it is a lapdog whose significance is entirely domestic, and largely—given the implication that its favorite and snuggest place to lie is in its mistress's lap—sexual. Quite often, however, it is pictured not at rest but rather yapping at the suitor or lending frisky empathy to the lovers' progress. In *Le fidèle indiscret* by Schall,⁸ the dog, present in bed with the couple, is altogether too excited and threatens, as the title indicates, to give them away. There are many such examples throughout the tradition of *art galant*. One interesting instance of ironic running commentary is provided by a series of five unsigned illustrations for Crébillon's *La nuit et le moment* (§17): the poodle barks in the first, raises his forepaws up to the bed in the second, scratches his ear in the third (as the "preliminaries" drag on), is asleep in a chair in the fourth, and watches with detachment (figure 8.7) in the last, when the sexual act is finally consummated. Excited doves are used sometimes in a similar way,⁹ but they have their limitations since they are purely allegorical, whereas the dog's status, partly literal, is more richly suggestive.

Semiotically, the dog's nervous temperament serves as a foil for female sexual tension.¹⁰ The legend for one intriguing print of a woman with a

poodle reads: "Dame en sincère et fidèle amie avec robe et jupon à l'anglo-américaine, bordée élégamment d'une étoffe différente, les manches ajustées, le noeud de rubans et le tour de gorge à la Gabrielle d'Estrées; jouant avec son chien en attendant mieux" (A woman as sincere and faithful friend with dress and slip in the Anglo-American style, bordered in a different fabric, with sleeves adjusted, a ribbon bow and bodice like Gabrielle d'Estrées, playing with her dog in hopes of something better).¹¹ *En attendant mieux*, of course, captures the gist of this association between the lapdog and sexual desire. A cat can play such a role as well, particularly given the genital associations of the word *chat*: a good example is Claude Louis Mouchet's *La méprise*, in which a young girl strokes her cat's fluffy tail with one hand while reaching toward her vagina with the other.¹² But one cannot come close to documenting their role in this context on the same scale as that of dogs.¹³

Lest this seem an overly tendentious reading of exaggerated meanings into simple and unpretentious symbols, we can point to more specifically sensual uses of the dog in both fiction and illustration. In the figure for chapter 26 of Diderot's *Bijoux indiscrets* (figure 8.11), it is for good reason that Haria's dog Médor is stationed between her legs. It is trying to prevent her groom from taking up his own place there:

"Permettez-moi, madame, lui dit-il, que j'écarte un peu ces rivaux."... Médor, le fidèle Médor, abandonné de ses alliés, avait tenté de réparer cette perte par les avantages du poste. Collé sur les cuisses de sa maîtresse, les yeux enflammés, le poil hérissé, et la gueule béante, il fronçait le museau, et présentait à l'ennemi deux rangs de dents des plus aiguës.... Sindor recourut au stratagème contre un ennemi qu'il désespérait de vaincre par la force. Il agaç Médor de la main droite. Médor attentif à ce mouvement, n'aperçut point celui de la gauche, et fut pris par le col.¹⁴

8.10 Dorat, "La mule et la pantoufle du mufti," tailpiece. Marillier/Née (§23: 41).





8. 11 Diderot, *Les bijoux indiscrets*, chap. 26.
Anon. (§18: 232).

["Allow me, madame," he said, "to remove these rivals." . . . Médor, the faithful Médor, deserted by his allies, had tried to compensate for their absence through advantage of position. Attached to his mistress's thighs, his eyes aflame, his hair on end and his mouth wide open, he wrinkled his muzzle and showed his enemy two rows of sharp teeth. . . . Sindor had recourse to strategy against an enemy that he desperately wanted to defeat by force. He teased Médor with his right hand. Médor, watching this movement, failed to see the left, and was seized by the collar.]

It is Haria's *bijoux* (vulva) that is narrating, conjured to do so by Mongogul precisely because there was already some suspicion about her intimate rapport with her numerous canines. Such is the sense, too, of the renditions in various media of Fragonard's *La gimblette*, in which a partially naked



8. 12 Nerciat, *Le diable au corps*. Anon. (§62: 1:1).

girl lying on her back in bed plays with a poodle held aloft on her raised legs while offering him (or teasing him with) the ring-shaped cookie or toy called a *gimblette*. In some versions, the dog is suspended from her feet.¹⁵ Of the same subject there are at least two differing sculptures extant attributed to Clodion (Claude Michel): by extending the naked girl's legs almost straight up, they offer the spectator an unobstructed view of her sexual parts.¹⁶ In another (the only one known to be by Fragonard himself), the dog lying atop the girl's lower legs looks down on her from between her knees, and his long, luxuriant tail is frisking her genitals: indeed, Pierre Rosenberg labels this "one of the most risqué images in French eighteenth-century art."¹⁷ One can go even further, and Nerciat and his illustrator did so in *Le diable au corps* (figure 8. 12): "Réveil. Il n'est pas encore jour chez la Marquise: elle s'éveille et détourne son rideau. Médor (son bichon) lui

fait fête; elle se découvre et se fait gamahucher un moment par l'intelligent animal: puis elle sonne" [It is morning, not yet daylight in the marquise's room. She awakes and turns back the curtain. Médor gives her a frisky welcome; she uncovers herself and lets the intelligent animal tongue her for a moment; then she rings].¹⁸ *Quod erat demonstrandum*.

When Humor Tempers Indecency

A distinction clearly needs to be made between gestures that are in themselves illicit and ones that, although in some context allowable, are not supposed to be pictured. The social approval of, or at least acquiescence in, certain acts, particularly sexual, does not always extend to their representation; and deliberate infraction by artists tends to occur precisely along this line of demarcation. It is frequently obscured by a narrative blurring of the theologically categorical dichotomy between the acts of married and unmarried couples. In general, however, just as most texts and illustrations avoid explicit evocation of copulation whether "licit" or not, those which allude to it at all tend to celebrate it indiscriminately. Fragonard, for one, depicted many borderline sexual encounters, including some of his drawings for the *Contes* of La Fontaine, on the one hand, and some rather maudlin preachments about sexual abuse, on the other.¹⁹

A particular way of playing on the freedom of illustrative suggestion is exemplified by the obscene gesture in a plate by Binet for Restif's *La paysanne perversie* (figure 8.13), an instance where the narrative itself seems to call for nothing quite so brazenly indecent:

[Parangon] s'était caché dans l'escalier de la salle à l'appartement, qui est obscur, et comme je passais, il m'a prise par *le milieu du corps*, en me disant: "Est-ce vous, Fanchette?" J'ai répondu: "Non, Monsieur, je suis Ursule." Mais il ne me lâchait toujours pas; et, en vérité, je ne sais ce qu'il me voulait faire: heureusement que Mlle Fanchette était dans le cabinet de sa soeur, et comme je parlais fort haut, elle m'a entendue; elle est venue à moi, et il m'a lâchée. "C'est joli! mon frère! de *faire peur* aux filles!" lui a-t-elle dit. Il s'est mis à rire. (§70, part 1, letter 8; italics added)

[He was hiding in the stairway leading from the main room to the apartment, which is dark, and as I passed he took me *by the waist* and said: "Is that you, Fanchette?" I answered: "No, sir, I am Ursula." But he still did not let me go, and in truth I know not what he wanted with me. Fortunately, Mlle Fanchette was in her sister's study; and as I spoke

8.13 Restif de la Bre-
tonne, *La paysanne
pervertie*. Binet/Anon.
(§70: 1:81).



loudly, she heard me. She came, and he let me go. "That's a fine thing, my brother, to *frighten* girls that way!" she said. He just laughed.]

The point of this contrast between image and text is not that Parangon's intentions are less than lascivious, or that *faire peur* is not an attenuated accusation on his sister's part for what she knows him to have been up to, but simply that *le milieu du corps* is in the text a far more ambiguous denotation than the topology of the illustration. Willfully indecent illustration, on the other hand, blatantly assaults both categories (what in life one may properly *do*, and what in art one is allowed to *depict*), although theoretically it could limit itself to just one. La Fontaine's "Le diable de Papefiguière," which purports to create a plausible narrative setting for the rather extraordinary gesture of Perette's holding her skirt up to bare her genitals to the devil's eyes, is a pure pleasantry on such distinctions. Its claim to relative innocence stems from the fact that she is not, despite the apparent boldness of her action, trying to be in any way seductive: the narrative context itself de-eroticizes her pudendum, which she pretends is a wound. This irony on the obscene was relished, too, by illustrators.

The interplay between illustration and text begins with the choice of passage to be illustrated, and the differing solutions adopted when there is more than one illustrator are especially instructive where problems of decency are concerned. It is difficult to think of any instance of a decent text indecently illustrated, and this suggests that a real option exists only when the text itself raises some questions of its own status in this regard. Voltaire's *La pucelle d'Orléans* was capable of offending with its parody of a national myth, Jeanne d'Arc, and especially of her heroic virginity. In the process, the poem develops a wide variety of sexual encounters; it was irreverent and scandalous, certainly indecent to many eyes though hardly what we would be likely to call pornographic. It was nonetheless elegantly illustrated by distinguished artists (Gravelot, Marillier, Moreau), who in most of their plates elect a guarded, studiously tasteful way of alluding to sexual content. Illustrators of the many pirate editions, however, were less obliged to respect norms of decorum. In the first canto, King Charles's first night with Agnès Sorel inspires verses intimating lubricious delight that is no more than hinted at by the tasteful use of the verb *embrasser*:

Vous voyez bien l'extrême impatience
 Dont pétillait notre bon roi de France!
 Sur ses cheveux en tresse retenus,
 Parfums exquis sont déjà répandus.
 Il vient, il entre au lit de sa maîtresse,
 Moment divin de joie et de tendresse,
 Le coeur leur bat, l'amour et la pudeur
 Au front d'Agnès font monter la rougeur.
 La pudeur passe et l'amour seul demeure.
 Son tendre amant l'embrasse tout à l'heure.
 (Voltaire 1970: 263)

[Lovers, 'tis you can feel the sharp desire,
 The strong impatience of great Gallia's sire.
 The graceful tresses that adorned his head,
 Already were with choicest perfumes spread,
 He came! O! tender moment, blissful night,
 He sprang towards his mistress with delight!
 Quick throbb'd their hearts; both tender love and shame
 The cheek of Agnes tinged with roseate flame;
 But bashfulness soon fled; the lover's arms
 Banished all fears, save tender love's alarms.
 (Voltaire, trans. Fleming 40:37)]



8.14 "But bashfulness soon fled; the lover's arms / Banished all fears, save tender love's alarms." Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 1. Moreau/Simonet (§85).

The Moreau illustration (figure 8.14) for the great Kehl edition tactfully takes leave of the scene at its point of inception, remaining largely allegorical at that: we see Pudeur, in the form of a wispy veil, taking flight as the king begins to slip into bed with Agnès. But the artist for the less constrained "London" edition of 1775 chose instead to illustrate the following passage (figure 8.15):

Sous un cou blanc qui fait honte à l'albâtre
Sont deux tétons séparés, faits au tour,
Allants, venants, arrondis par l'amour;
Leur boutonnet a la couleur des roses.
Téton charmant qui jamais ne repose
Vous invitiez les mains à vous presser,
L'oeil à vous voir, la bouche à vous baiser.
(Voltaire 1970: 263–64)

[Who but would worship, that like him had pressed
A neck in fairest alabaster dressed;

Two rising orbs at equal distance placed,
 Heaving and falling, by Love's pencil traced,
 Each crowned with vermil blood of damask rose;
 Enchanting bosom which ne'er knew repose,
 You seemed the gaze and pressure to invite,
 And wooed the longing lips to seek delight.]

(Voltaire, trans. Fleming 40:37–38)

What is at issue is both the selection of text and the manner of visualizing it. One could of course illustrate even such a passage as this in any number of ways without insisting on the receptiveness of Agnès's body, not to mention the king's erect penis—a consistent feature of this edition, and virtually the only irrecusable formal criterion, sufficient but not necessary,



8.15 Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 1.
 Anon. (§87: 9).

for classification of an image as indecent. That unmitigated transgression of decency in this instance compounds—with reference to the very sexual excess that the engraving boldly indulges—the irony of gainsaying the text, which in the name of propriety *represents an ellipsis*:

Pour mes lecteurs tout plein de complaisance,
J'allais montrer à leurs yeux ébaudis
De ce beau corps les contours arrondis.
Mais la vertu, qu'on nomme *bienséance*
Vient *arrêter mes pinceaux* trop hardis. . . .
Trois mois entiers nos deux jeunes amants
Furent livrés à ces ravissements.
(Voltaire 1970: 264; italics added)

{Ever complying with my reader's taste,
I mean to paint as low as Agnes' waist;
To show that symmetry, devoid of blot,
Where Argus' self could not discern a spot;
But virtue, which the world good manners calls,
Stops short my hand, —And lo! the pencil falls. . . .
Three months they shared this ecstasy of joy,
Nor did one envious cloud their bliss annoy.
(Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 40:37–38)}

In this case only the literary and metaphorical *pinceaux* are suspended; the illustrator on the contrary insists upon what the text refrains from mentioning. Which is not to minimize the humorous aspect of either text or image, which must perforce express irony in different ways. In terms of the punning licensed by the text, both of these illustrations are equally “faithful” to it: for allegorizing a metaphor in the first instance (picturing “la pudeur passe”) is no less an artistic license than filling in the ellipsis in the second (picturing what cannot be said).

The narrator plays, too, with terms of sexual reference, with their interchangeability or lack thereof; but there is no direct correlation between passages that do this and illustration itself. In a similar situation, in canto 14, he has Chandos kneeling in church to look up Dorothee’s skirt; what follows brings in the narrative/illustration metaphor of reticence in the name of good taste:

Sans nul respect pour un lieu si divin,
Il va glissant une insolente main
Sous le jupon qui couvre un blanc satin.

Je ne veux point par un crayon cynique,
 Effarouchant l'esprit sage et pudique
 De mes lecteurs, *étaler à leurs yeux*
 Du grand Chandos l'effort audacieux.
 (Voltaire 1970: 487; italics added)

[Without respect for sacred spot or choir,
 He dared his hand most insolently glide
 'Neath coats that veiled the satin's lily pride.
 I cannot with a cynic's pencil draw,
 To strike the sage and modest sight with awe
 Of every reader; nor to mind retail,
 Of daring Chandos, the audacious tale.
 (Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 41:113)]

The tropes in Voltaire's poem are usually an integral part of the humor, and this preterition is no exception; the narrator protests his judicious restraint only after telling us that Chandos's hand has gone up under her skirt. When Dorothée's own lover enters the church and sees what is going on, however, the narrator paradoxically calls for a picture:

La Trimouille entre au moment où le prêtre
 Se retournait, où l'insolent Chandos
 Etait tout près du plus charmant des dos,
 Où Dorothée, effrayée, éperdue,
 Poussait des cris qui vont fendre la nue.
Je voudrais voir nos bon peintres nouveaux
 Sur cette affaire *exerçant leurs pinceaux*,
Peindre à plaisir sur ces quatre visages
 L'étonnement des quatre personnages.
 (Voltaire 1970: 487–88; italics added)

[Trimouille arrived, just as the priest turned round,
 And Chandos insolent, his rude hand found,
 Near the most perfect of all backs below,
 As fainting Dorothy, with terror's glow,
 Emitted piercing screams; loud, echoing wide.
 Fain would I have some modern painter guide
 His pencil to portray this touching scene,
 And trace of objects four, on every mien,
 The fell astonishment that mantled there.
 (Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 41:113–14)]



8.16 Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 14. Anon. (§87: 214). 8.17 Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 14. Monsiau/Delvaux (§88: 2:71).

To this dubious invitation one illustrator (figure 8.16) gladly rose, less concerned however with the expression on their faces, which is what the poem calls for, than with the greatly (and of course humorously) overstated act of aggression. Monsiau's later version (figure 8.17) evidently patterned on the more scabrous one, greatly attenuates Chandos's temerity without in exchange capturing much of the characters' expression.

One passage with heavy satirical intent is in canto 2, where Jeanne's mandatory virginity is constrained to meet standards of official documentation:

Le roi lui dit d'un ton de majesté
 Qui confondrait toute autre fille qu'elle:
 Jeanne, écoutez: Jeanne, êtes-vous pucelle?
 Jeanne lui dit: ô grand sire, ordonnez
 Que médecins, lunettes sur le nez,
 Matrones, clerks, pédants, apothicaires
 Viennent sonder ces féminins mystères,
 Et si quelqu'un se connaît à cela,
 Qu'il troussé Jeanne, et qu'il regarde là.
 A sa réponse et sage et mesurée,

Le roi vit bien qu'elle était inspirée. . . .
 Incontinent la cohorte fourrée,
 Bonnet en tête, Hippocrate à la main,
 Vient observer le pur et noble sein
 De l'amazone à leurs regards livrée:
 On la met nue, et monsieur le doyen
 Ayant le tout considéré très bien,
 Dessus, dessous, expédie à la belle,
 En parchemin un brevet de pucelle.
 (Voltaire 1970: 294–95)

{Thus spoke the king, in a majestic tone
 Which any might have feared, but she alone:
 "Joan hear me: Joan, if thou'rt a maid, avow."
 Joan answered: "Oh! great sire, give orders now
 That doctors sage, with spectacles on nose,
 Who versed in female mysteries can depose,
 That clerks, apothecaries, matrons tried,
 Be called at once the matter to decide;
 Let them all scrutinize, and let them see."
 By this sage answer Charles knew she must be
 Inspired and blessed with sweet virginity. . . .
 Immediately appeared the fur-capped band,
 Their bonnets on, Hippocrates in hand,
 They came to view the bosom purely fair
 Of warrior chaste committed to their care.
 Naked they stripped her, and the senior sage,
 Having considered all that could engage,
 Above, below, on parchment then displayed
 An attestation, that Joan was a maid.
 (Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 40:83)}

That humor is equally well conveyed, one could say, in two quite different illustrations, one by Monsiau (figure 8.18) and the other anonymous (figure 8.19). Both stress the meticulousness of the inspection process (underscored by the use of eyeglasses); the most obvious and significant distinction between the two treatments is that although the former shows Jeanne only from behind, the latter gives a frontal view of her pudenda, which the doctor is in fact *touching*. (A further extravagance is the positioning of her leg over his shoulder.)²⁰ The subject is clearly related, despite



8. 18 Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 2. Monsiau/Lingée (§88: 1:45).

8. 19 Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 2. Anon. (§88: 1:31).

the disparity in literary source, to the many artistic renditions of Suzanna and the Elders.

A similar comparison can be made between three very similar versions of canto 3, two of them anonymous. All relate quite directly to the same twenty or so lines describing what happens when Agnès is brought a prisoner to Chandos. She happens to be wearing Jeanne's armor and with it the *culotte* that Jeanne had earlier taken from Chandos himself:

Chandos pressé d'un aiguillon bien vif,
La dévorait de son regard lascif.
Agnès en tremble et l'entend qui marmotte
Entre ses dents: Je r'aurai ma culotte.
A son chevet d'abord il la fait seoir:
Quittez, dit-il, ma belle prisonnière,
Quittez ce poids d'une armure étrangère.
Ainsi parlant plein d'ardeur et d'espoir,
Il la décasque, il vous la décuirasse.
La belle Agnès s'en défend avec grâce,
Elle rougit d'une aimable pudeur,
Pensant à Charles et soumise au vainqueur. . . .

Monsieur Chandos, hélas! que faites-vous?
 Disait Agnès d'un ton timide et doux.
 Pardieu, dit-il, tout héros anglais jure,
 Quelqu'un m'a fait une sanglante injure.
 Cette culotte est mienne et je prendrai
 Ce qui fut mien où je le trouverai.
 Parler ainsi, mettre Agnès toute nue,
 C'est même chose, et le belle éperdue
 Tout en pleurant était entre ses bras,
 Et lui disait: Non je n'y consens pas.
 (Voltaire 1970: 314–15)

[The hero warmed by every witching grace,
 Gazed with lascivious eyes on Agnes' face:
 She trembled, and then muttering, heard him say,
 "Anon my breeches I shall bear away":
 First on the bolster placing his fair prize,
 "Quit my sweet captive," said he, "this disguise;
 Cast off these ponderous arms, unfit for thee,
 And shine arrayed in beauty's livery."
 He ceased, then filled with hope and ardor too,
 Her helmet and her breast-plate quick withdrew;
 Struggling, the fair defended each bright charm,
 And blushed, for modesty had taken alarm,
 Thinking of Charles, and bowed to conqueror's will. . . .
 Agnes exclaimed in tender trembling tone:
 "Oh! Mister Chandos, leave me now alone;
 What are you doing? Prithee, Sir, forbear."
 "Ods zounds," quoth he—(all English heroes swear),
 "Some one was guilty of a crying sin,
 Those are my breeches which your limbs are in,
 And when I find that which by right is mine,
 I'll have it, I protest, by powers divine."
 To argue thus and Agnes to unclothe
 Was the same thing; the fair one, something loth,
 Wept struggling in his arms against the intent,
 Then screamed full loud—"No, I do not consent."
 (Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 40:114–15)]

It is, of course, in part the seriousness of such formal refusals that Voltaire is mocking, and the first artist, Monsiau, has no more exaggerated

Agnès's defensive ferocity than did Voltaire (figure 4.11). The second example seems to be a parody of the first (figure 8.20), exaggerating all of its features so that Chandos appears more avid and uninhibited and Agnès less reluctant. In all three illustrations, the armor (with its ever-prominent breast enclosures, in fact parodically inflated in the latter two) has already fallen from her to the ground. The third emphasizes Chandos in the act of unclothing her and also, of course, his phallus: he graphically personifies rapacious libido (figure 8.21).

Similarly, Chandos takes on Jeanne herself in canto 13. In terms that are deliberately both military and sexual, he defies the French to defend their three women (Dorothée, Agnès, Jeanne):

Çà, combattons; je veux que la fortune
 Décide ici qui sait le mieux de nous
 Mettre à plaisir ses ennemis dessous,
 Frapper d'estoc et pointer de sa lance.
 Que de vous tous le plus ferme s'avance,
 Qu'on entre en lice, et celui qui vaincra
 L'une des trois à son aise tiendra.
 (Voltaire 1970: 470)

[Come—we'll to blows, here fortune's wheel shall run,
 Deciding which of us in war's fell thunder,
 At will shall make his enemies knock under;
 Raise battle axe, and place in rest the lance,
 Let the most valiant of our troop advance,
 And enter lists: so he that conquers seizes,
 One of the three, to do just what he pleases.
 (Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 41:85)]

At this, Jeanne, who has been parading her charms in feminine garb, dons armor in order to answer the challenge in person. The terrible shock of the first clash knocks her ass unconscious, thereby hurling her defenseless to the ground; but at the last minute Saint Denis intervenes to save her fearfully threatened virginity by striking Chandos with impotency, making a shambles of virile braggadocio. This is a horrible trick, the narrator concedes, for a saint to resort to:

C'est une étrange et terrible recette
 Et dont un saint ne doit jamais user
 Que quand d'une autre il ne peut s'aviser.



8.20 "Anon my breeches I shall bear away." Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 3. Anon. (§88: 1:60). 8.21 Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 3. Anon. (§87: 53).

D'un pauvre amant le feu se tourne en glace,
 Vif et perclus sans rien faire il se lasse,
 Dans ses efforts étonné de languir
 Et consumé sur le bord du plaisir.
 Telle une fleur des feux du jour séchée,
 La tête basse et la tige penchée,
 Demande en vain les humides vapeurs
 Qui lui rendaient la vie et les couleurs.
 Voilà comment le bon Denis arrête
 Le fier Anglais dans ses droits de conquête.
 (Voltaire 1970: 481–82)

{A dreadful custom this, and much misplaced,
 Which never saint should use, unless indeed,
 No other means were present in their stead.
 To ice the wretched lover's fire is turned,
 His powers by impotence become inurned,
 Surprised with efforts to find vigor sink,



8.22 Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 13.
Anon. (§87: 194).

Consuming thus, at pleasure's very brink:
So with the flower that scorching rays hath spent,
Its head reclining, and its stalk low bent;
That seeks in vain moist vapors to inhale,
And waft its fragrance to the passing gale;—
Such was the method Denis took to blight
The valiant Briton in his conquest's right.
(Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 41:94)]

One illustration, perhaps picking up on the flower simile (“la tige penchée”), pictures Chandos, with a cloud of witnesses, looking down helplessly at his limp member (figure 8.22), while the other (figure 8.23) rotates him away from view so that, although the gesture is the same, it is viewed from behind. Yet given Jeanne’s spread legs, this latter illustration is just barely (if at all) decent by contemporary standards. The ass is splayed out like a dead bug—

Les fers en l'air et la tête penchée,
 L'oreille basse et du choc écorchée,
 Languissamment le céleste baudet
 D'un oeil confus Jean Chandos regardait.
 (Voltaire 1970: 475)

{The ass celestial languishingly raised
 His eye, and all confused on Chandos gazed . . .
 (Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 41:89)}

—and Saint Denis is hovering right there in the sky to preside, as in a hagiographic painting.

By all odds the funniest of these episodes involves Jeanne's “étrange tentation” (as the “Argument” puts it) by the miraculous talking ass in canto 20.²¹ The Moreau illustration in the Kehl edition, like the Monsiau one that is similar (figure 8.24), pictures Jeanne in bed, her armor set aside,

8.23 “Voilà comment le
 bon Denis arrête. . . .”
 Voltaire, *La pucelle
 d'Orléans*, canto 13
 Marillier/Delignon
 (§88: 1:207).





8.24 "At speech so daring, very far from sage: / Joan justly found in breast, enkindled rage. . . ." Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 20. Monsiau/Pauquet (§88: 1:289).

entertaining with weakening resolve the ass's suave seductions, just as Dunois appears at the door to confound his dreadful purpose;²² this interruption is compared to Vulcan's discovery of Venus "sous le dieu Mars . . . toute nue." The text goes on to stress that

Jeanne après tout n'a point été vaincue,
Le bon Denis ne l'abandonnait pas.
(Voltaire 1970: 571)

[Joan, after all, was not subdued 'tis plain,
Denis o'er Satan held the curbing rein.
(Voltaire, trans. Fleming, 41:224)]

But there was a possibly spurious and infinitely more scandalous variant of this passage, where Jeanne indeed succumbed. One artist (figure 8.25) took full advantage of the comic potential of its verse:

Elle n'est plus la maîtresse de ses sens,
 Ses yeux mouillés deviennent languissants.
 Dessus son lit sa tête s'est penchée,
 De ses beaux yeux la honte s'est cachée;
 Ses yeux pourtant regardaient par en bas,
 Elle étalait ses robustes appas.
 De son cu brun les vouîtes s'élevèrent
 Et ses genoux sous elle se plièrent. . . .
 L'enfant malin qui tient sous son empire
 Le genre humain, les ânes et les dieux,
 Son arc en main, planait au haut des cieux
 Et voyait Jeanne avec un doux sourire,
 Serrant la fesse et tortillant le cu,
 Brûler des feux dont son amant pétille,
 Hâter l'instant de cesser d'être fille,
 Et, du satin de son croupion charnu
 De son baudet presser l'inguen à cru.²³
 Déjà trois fois la défunte pucelle
 Avait senti dans son brûlant manoir
 Jaillir les eaux du céleste arrosoir,
 Et quatre fois la terrible alumelle
 Jusques au vif ayant percé la belle,
 Jeanne avait vu, car bien sentir c'est voir,
 Du chaud brasier qui couve au-dedans d'elle
 Naître et mourir mainte et mainte étincelle.
 Quand tout à coup on entend une voix:
 Jeanne! accourez, signalez vos exploits,
 Levez-vous donc, Dunois est sous les armes,
 On va combattre et déjà nos gendarmes
 Avec le roi commencent à sortir.
 Habillez-vous, est-il temps de dormir?
 C'était la belle et jeune Dorothée,
 De bonté d'âme envers Jeanne portée,
 Qui la croyant dans les bras du sommeil
 Venait la voir et hâter son réveil.
 Ainsi parlant à la belle pâmée,
 Elle entrouvrit la porte mal fermée,
 Vit le duo dans le fort de ses exploits
 Et se signa de honte par trois fois.²⁴

[Joan was no longer mistress of her senses. Langor showed in her damp eyes; she rested her head upon her bed, hiding the shame in her fair eyes; yet they were looking out beneath. She displayed her robust charms; the vaults of her brown crotch rose up, and her knees folded under her. . . . That malicious child who holds humankind, asses and gods, in his empire soared above, bow in hand, and saw Joan with a gentle smile, flexing her hips and writhing her behind, burn with the fire that sparked her suitor, hasten the moment when she would be a maid no more, and with the satin of her fleshy haunches press her ass's naked tool. Thrice already the former virgin had felt surge in her burning manor the spring of the celestial fountain, and four times had the terrible blade pierced the girl to the quick. Joan had seen grow and subside many and many a spark of the ardent furnace within her (for properly to feel is seeing), when suddenly a voice was heard: "Joan, come quickly, come vaunt your prowess, arise: Dunois is under arms; we are to fight, and already our

8.25 Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 18 (variant). Anon. (§87: 259).



militia are going forth with the king. Get dressed; is this a time for sleeping?" It was the fair young Dorothee, ushered toward Joan by her own good soul, who, believing her to be in the arms of sleep, came to look in and hasten her awakening. Speaking thus to the unconscious beauty, she pushed open the unfastened door. O God, what a sight! Trembling, she thrice made the sign of the cross.]

This is an instance where the flagrant obscenity of the illustration is nearly overwhelmed by its hilarity; Dorothee's shielding of her eyes on entering the room unexpectedly is priceless. And, of course, so is its egregious irreverence, the utterly preposterous bestiality of a religious heroine being treated quite literally.²⁵ Though this is an extreme example, it still illustrates the general strategy, amply exploited by Voltaire but by many others as well, through which humor tempers indecency and by so doing tends, by making it palatable for people who think themselves usually proper, to recuperate it for decency.

Naked and Not (Quite)

It is important to be clear about the differing conventions of various media, because the nude has always had its place in Western art, religious art not excepted. The parameters vary not only in function of historical period, but of anecdotal subject as well; the license accorded to mythological motifs was less easily countenanced in historical or religious paintings. But the Bible, too, is replete with sexual subjects, and these could up to a point be represented. Even the queen of France was not off limits for the kind of stylized nudity that Rubens painted into his famous Medici series for the Palais du Luxembourg (now at the Louvre).

It is instructive in this light to see how various of these biblical subjects were in fact handled by illustrators. It is obvious that grandiose plates can be paired to the thunderous events of the Old Testament and the saintly ones of the New, and the artist certainly could, by contenting himself with them, steer clear of salacious themes that might be viewed with reservations in some quarters. Marillier's designs for the Bible of 1789 in no way suggest that he felt constrained to such circumspection. One can suppose that the publishers of such a sumptuous edition would have expected purchasers to possess the sophistication necessary to appreciate its artistic refinement more than they worried about its moral orthodoxy; or that, by this date, they thought censorship (official and other) sufficiently weakened as to pose no serious obstacle. More telling, perhaps,

than subjects already standard to painting such as Bathsheba or Suzanna, are certain erotic episodes less established in artistic tradition. It is not so much nudity that is principally at issue as the explicitness of sexual activity. Agar, nude but modest, is shown just climbing into Abraham's bed;²⁶ the end of their action is hardly mysterious, but reference to it is all the same rather guarded. Lot's daughters in *Inceste des filles de Loth* are fully clothed, yet one is plying him with wine while the other begins to caress him, with the flames of Sodom and Gomorrah still flickering beyond the cavernous mouth of their strikingly vaginal cave (figure 8.26).

Yet some of these illustrations are far less oblique. Potiphar's wife in *La chasteté de Joseph*, though draped, is as enticing and lascivious as can be, and her avid, grasping advances appear to horrify Joseph (figure 8.27). Despite the title, the illustration seems ill designed to inspire thoughts of chastity: indeed, according to *Iconologie par figures*, Potiphar's wife is herself the very emblem of "impudeur."²⁷ *Fornication et idolâtrie d'Israël*, from the book of Numbers (figure 8.28), ignores the other 24,000 Israelites punished for whoring with pagans, in order to portray the one who had paraded a Midianite woman into his tent in plain view of Moses. He is about to be stabbed by Phineas while in the very throes of sensual delight; in this context, the emblematically overturned winecup is almost superfluous. Marillier seems

8.26 *Incest of Lot's daughters*. Marillier/De Ghendt (§73: 1:41). 8.27 *Joseph's chastity*. Marillier/Dambrun (§73: 1:98).



8.28 *Israel's fornication and idolatry*. Marillier/de Launay (§73: 2:154).



almost to have gone out of his way to seize upon a biblical pretext for so juicy a scene. He does it with great style, of course, and thus opposes in the best traditional manner the claims of art to those of moral control. Indeed elegance alone—certainly not historical realism—would explain the magnificent furnishings of this “tent,” complete with a Roman-like statue hardly suitable for a nomadic society.

If we can consider Gessner’s extrapolation on *La mort d’Abel* as a biblical subject, it is interesting to contrast the different styles of absolutely parallel poses representing Abel with his beloved Thirza, rendered by Moreau on the one hand (figure 8.29) and Marillier on the other (figure 8.30). But what a difference! The youthfulness and delicacy of the latter couple seem to make them at once more sensual and more innocent; while Abel lifts his arms in a demonstrative gesture toward God, Thirza appears rather to be worshipping *him*. Moreover, there is no rational (narrative) cause for their nakedness: they are no longer in Eden, so all God’s children are supposed at this point to be clothed to hide their shame.

Also, conventions differed radically depending on which sex was represented. Nude women in art were in many ways still as acceptable as in



8.29 Gessner, *La mort d'Abel*. Moreau/De Ghendt (§35: 3:31). 8.30 "Oh my beloved, thy songs exalt my soul to God!" Gessner, *La mort d'Abel*. Marillier/De Ghendt (§35: 3:36).

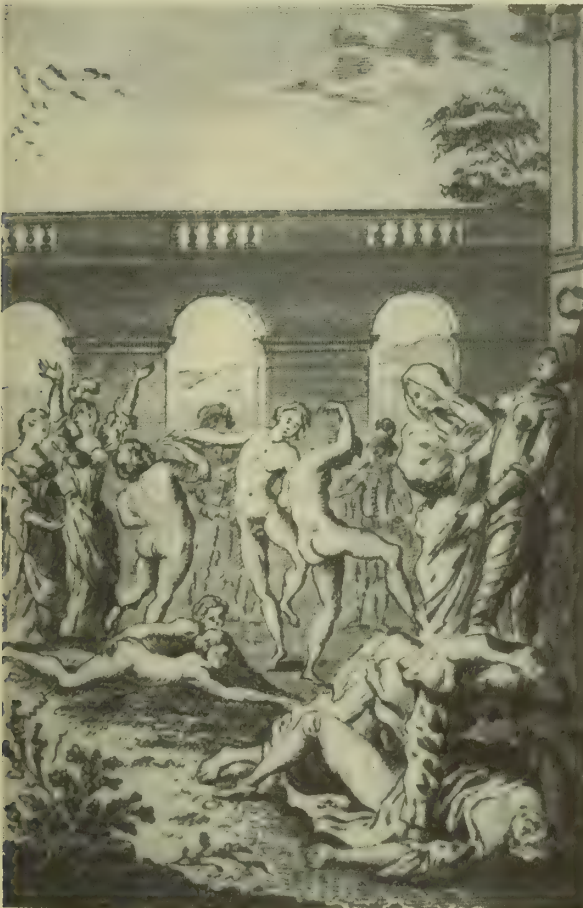
Greek times, provided only that the pubic area be neutralized (smoothed over and devoid of vagina or hair). Such a convention, probably derived principally from sculpture but common in painting as well, was not easily adapted to the male figure. Michelangelo's *David* stands boldly and fully equipped. It is doubtful that even this degree of candor would have been well countenanced in eighteenth-century France; in any event, it would pass more easily in sculpture than in painting, and even there context and style in each instance have to be carefully assessed. There are plenty of succulent feminine nudes in Boucher: Diderot indeed reproached him for his excesses,²⁸ his surfeit of "tétons et fesses";²⁹ yet the bare buttocks of Boucher's isolated O'Murphy portraits with their egregiously open thighs³⁰ are much more provocative than all his goddesses bedded by Jupiter.

The conventions of illustration are somewhat easier to schematize because engraving is an inherently stylized medium. Still, great variation is to be found, and most discussions of the subject that have assumed our ability to make instinctive discriminations between the decent and indecent seem to me a bit presumptuous and often sententious. But as Alain-Marie Bassy remarks, the voyeur's pleasure arises from his mastery of the code, which allows him to skirt the outer limits of moral license; and

the pleasure increases as code becomes more subtle and complex (1984: 161). Some rules are rather straightforward: the presence of a couple copulating in the foreground of one anonymous illustration of Voltaire's *La pucelle d'Orléans* (figure 8.31) obviously casts the hilarity of the general scene in an illicit light, without for all that necessarily negating its humor.³¹

Often, in engraving, the indecency consists in being just a bit more explicit than the subject would seem to require. Eisen approaches this degree of excess in his plate for "Le bât" (figure 8.32), an extremely succinct tale from La Fontaine that consists entirely of the following lines:

Un peintre était, qui jaloux de sa femme,
Allant aux champs lui peignit un baudet
Sur le nombril, en guise de cachet.



8.31 Voltaire, *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 14 (variant). Anon. (§87: 205).

Un sien confrère amoureux de la dame,
 La va trouver, et l'âne efface net;
 Dieu sait comment; puis un autre en remet
 Au même endroit, ainsi que l'on peut croire.
 A celui-ci, par faute de mémoire,
 Il mit un bât; l'autre n'en avait point.
 L'époux revient, veut s'éclaircir du point.
 Voyez, mon fils, dit la bonne commère,
 L'âne est témoin de ma fidélité.
 Diantre soit fait, dit l'époux en colère,
 Et du témoin, et de qui l'a bâti.
 (1980: 239)

[A famous painter, jealous of his wife,
 Whose charms he valued more than fame or life,
 When going on a journey used his art,
 To paint an ASS upon a certain part,
 (Umbilical, 'tis said) and like a seal:
 Impressive token, nothing thence to steal.

A brother brush, enamoured of the dame,
 Now took advantage, and declared his flame:
 The ASS effaced, but God knows how 'twas done;
 Another soon howe'er he had begun,
 And finished well, upon the very spot;
 In painting, few more praises ever got;
 But want of recollection made him place
 A saddle, where before he none could trace.

The husband, when returned, desired to look
 At what he drew, when leave he lately took.
 Yes, see my dear, the wily wife replied,
 The ASS is witness, faithful I abide.
 Zounds!—said the painter, when he got a sight,—
 What!—you'd persuade me ev'ry thing is right?
 I wish the witness you display so well,
 And him who saddled it, were both in Hell.
 (La Fontaine, trans. Anon., 2:250)]

Visually, Eisen's work is as compressed as La Fontaine's, although of course in different ways. Raising her skirt so high, he has come as close as an artist usually dares to portraying lovers sexually coupled (or about to be, in this



8.32 La Fontaine, "Le bât." Eisen/Anon. (§44: 2:233). 8.33 Restif de la Bretonne, *La paysanne pervertie*. Binet/Anon. (§70).

case).³² In Restif's *La paysanne pervertie* Binet gets perhaps nearer yet to indecency, but via a different route, by shading the region between Ursule's legs seen through a deliberately wispy veil (figure 8.33): "J'étais sous le déshabillé le plus voluptueux," she says, "une simple gaze me couvrait, sans presque rien cacher, si ce n'est dans quelques endroits, où elle formait des doubles" [I was in the most voluptuous gown, covered by nothing but gauze which hardly hid anything, except in some places where it was folded over] (§70, part 6, letter 112). In painting, Fragonard for one takes advantage instead of the diaphanous potential of oils to render the pudenda ambiguous, as in *Le feu aux poudres* and *Le verre d'eau*. Nicolas Ponce's engraving of the latter (figure 8.34), on the contrary, deliberately utilizes the fine line of engraving to delineate the labia and thus expose them to view in a manner that contrasts sharply with the suggestively unfocused style of the canvas.

The very miniaturization of fine vignettes favors the practice of sexual allusion of such minute scale that it becomes in a sense inoffensive by dint of being all but unnoticeable to the unaided eye. One of Dorat's *Baisers* poems, for example, is a starkly sexual piece named "L'extase" where lovers' entwined arms and legs are compared to a vine:



8.34 *The glass of water*, print (detail). Fragonard/Ponce.

Vois, ma Thaïs, cette vigne amoureuse,
 Se marier à ce jeune arbrisseau;
 Vois le lierre embrasser l'ormeau
 De sa guirlande tortueuse.
 Puissent tes bras voluptueux
 Me serrer, m'enchaîner de même!
 Puissé-je, par autant de noeuds,
 T'enlacer, te presser, te ceindre de mes feux,
 Me replier cent fois autour de ce que j'aime,
 Et puissions-nous enfin nous reposer tous deux
 Dans l'extase du bien suprême,
 Et ce calme enflammé connu des vrais heureux!
 (§20: 105–6)

[Behold, my Thais, how the amorous vines
 Embrace the shrubs that they are set beneath,
 And how the clinging ivy twines
 About the elm her twisted wreath;
 Let your fond arms enlase,
 Clasp me, and twine about me so,
 And I, in turn, embrace
 And press your form with such a fiery glow
 That round my form a hundred ties may go,
 Until at last we both reposing lie



8.35 Dorat, *Les baisers*, headpiece (detail).
Eisen/Née (§20: 105).

In pleasure's final ecstasy,
And the warm peace that happy lovers know.
(Dorat, trans. Keene, 99–100)]

Eisen's headpiece (figure 8.35) is so graphically literal as to be of marginal taste but is at the same time so microscopic (the figures are barely 3 centimeters high) as to constitute almost a private joke, a deliberate and coy subterfuge.

Not too infrequently, the engraver inscribes on the naked female the barest intimation of a vaginal crevice that you have to look very closely even to see. An example is the Eisen illustration for Dorat's *Irza et Marsis* (figure 8.36), or the detail (figure 8.37) of figure 7.16, already shown. This is true even of a couple of Moreau's illustrations for *La pucelle d'Orléans* in the Kehl Voltaire, which are usually well within the confines of decency: in the canto 2 plate (figure 6.23 above), the pubic region is ambiguously darkened by closely spaced lines, but on some copies a perpendicular delineation of the vagina is also traced; such is true as well of the plate for canto 6 (figure 8.38). Since it is such a small touch, the allusion seems to be sneaked in with secret glee by the engraver who knows that the mischievous slit can easily be rubbed out if need be. Precisely because it is so easy to modify them, plates were sometimes tampered with, and such a delicate sexual gash in some but not all prints of a given illustration cannot with complete confidence be ascribed to the original artist or engraver. In a relatively chaste and delicate little engraving for Berquin's "Les Grâces"



8.36 Dorat, *Irza et Marsis*, canto 2. Eisen/Massard (§24).

(figure 8.39) one is a bit surprised to find one of the Graces sporting a minuscule but unmistakable tuft of dark pubic hair. A plate by Le Barbier for the Moschus idyll *Daphnis et Naïs* (figure 8.40), calls attention by its vaginal emphasis to the sexual nature of the encounter the story entails: Daphnis came, as he says, to “épouser” Naïs, who while resisting, lets him remove her clothing and ends up declaring quite baldly, “Je suis venue vierge ici, et j’en sors épouse” [I came here a virgin, and I leave a wife] (§32: 94).³³ Whereas with the anonymous rendering of Jeanne’s resistance to Hermaphrodix (figure 8.41) all subtlety is renounced: displaying the aggressive and aggressed organs becomes the main objective.

There are some celebrated examples of *gravures découvertes*—that is, somewhat less decent variants of illustrations that also exist in discreet, veiled state. The best known are certain pairings from Ovid and the *Contes* of La Fontaine, such as the masked or unmasked genitals of Guillot in “Le cas de conscience”³⁴ and the similarly shielded female pudenda for the scene announcing the pregnancy of Calypso in Ovid.³⁵ Such contrasting pairs of plates have habitually been assimilated to cases of supposedly “rejected” plates (there are many examples of proofs executed by the artists but never actually used in an edition) and therefore advanced as evidence of the edulcoration imposed by publishers who must have found them ex-



8.37 Ariosto, *Roland furieux*, canto 34 (detail). Cochin/Ponce (§2: 3:254).



A ses genoux le chétif Muletier,
Craignant pour soi le sort du Cordelier,



8.38 "Fore Joan then prostrate knelt the muleteer, / Dreading fell judgment of the Cordelier. . . ." Voltaire *La pucelle d'Orléans*, canto 6 (detail). Moreau/Trière (§85: 11). 8.39 Berquin, "Les Grâces." Marillier/De Ghendt (§8: 1:19–21).

cessively audacious. But, as Candace Clements points out in her study of the "Fermiers Généraux" edition of La Fontaine (1982), not only is there no reason to believe that the artists did not themselves choose to start over for what may be æsthetic reasons of their own,³⁶ there is also no proof that the "uncovered" plates invariably preceded rather than followed the "covered" ones. In the case of La Fontaine's *Le cas de conscience* illustrated by Eisen,³⁷ for example, the foliage that partly hides Guillot's nakedness in the covered version would most easily have been added after the uncovered one had been printed. Far from implying censorship, then, the case probably illustrates the deliberate creation of two alternate versions of the plate, one of which would be available through unofficial channels to certain discriminating and affluent buyers.

A copper engraving is relatively easy to adulterate, although *pentimenti* are not always completely undetectable; it suffices to burnish a particular area, thus removing all lines, and then reinscribe it. Actual examples are rare, since all evidence of change disappears unless proofs of both states survive. I know of one instance where such a change was performed simply

to improve a facial expression.³⁸ Thus, not surprisingly, plates were sometimes tampered with for purposes of sexual allusion.³⁹ Comparison of the two states of *Jupiter et Io* by Monnet (figures 8.42 and 8.43) shows how deft yet crucial such retouching could be. Since there was already by the middle of the eighteenth century an active collector's market for special states of important engravings, it is assumed that such "uncovered" variants were sold quietly, often or perhaps always separately from the editions themselves, to those who could afford them; but they also turn up in some now highly prized copies of books because plates were always bound into volumes according to the owner's instructions.⁴⁰

The book police, which could only to a limited degree control the sale of books, thus had even less power over engravings, which could easily be disseminated independently; in fact, no copper plate is ever an integral part of a printed text, since type and plate were printed by different kinds of presses (and, for that matter, governed in their production by different decrees). Clearly we have here an example of what Guido Ruggiero has described as two distinct social categories of sexuality,

a licit one that hinged on marriage and childbirth and an illicit one. Both licit and illicit produced their own institutions, artifacts, languages, values, and habits. . . . From the Renaissance, parallel to the

8.40 Moschus, *Daphnis et Naïs* (detail). Le Barbier/Gaucher (§32: 87).



8.41 "That Joan in
this was faulty is most
true; / Respectful feel-
ings to her host were
due." Voltaire, *La
pucelle d'Orléans*, canto
4. Anon. (§88: 1:75).



family and its Christian-based culture, another culture has developed, that of the mistress, the prostitute, the libertine; of rape, adultery, and fornication; of words with double meaning, obscene language, and pornography; of Aretino, Madame du Chatelet, and the Marquis de Sade; of the exploitation of women and men, mad passions and gentler ones. (1985: 10)

The instances he cites have as much to do with what one can *say* or *show* with official approval as what one may *do*: what we have is in effect two counterbalancing and mutually dependent cultures. There has always been a temptation to conclude that they divide along lines of social class, the licitness of established art being noble-minded like the ruling classes, official by dint of that very identification, and repressed or immoral art being assimilated to the crudeness of the lower classes. The earthiness of the *fabliaux's* language thus long relegated them to bourgeois or popular

attribution, and the willful vulgarity of language of such popular manifestations as *Le Père Duchesne* during the Revolution seem to represent the determined rejection of aristocratic taste along with aristocratic privilege. But Ruggiero's very examples—la marquise du Châtelet, le marquis de Sade—reveal how misleading such a schema would be, for illicitness belongs as much to high culture as to low. Although our subject here is rather illustration than historical sexual practice, the same sort of division exists; lascivious pictures are officially repressed, but they are allowed to exist within certain formal constraints. These juxtapositions of parallel decent and indecent illustrations simply show how closely the two strains could come together, in conjunction at least with certain literary forms.

The question of what is decent in language is itself an old theme of literature that has lost none of its pertinence. The Lover in Jean de Meung's *Roman de la rose* is shocked by Reason's uninhibited allusion to Saturn's unhappy *coilles* ('couilles'); in her response, which defends the "proper" or vernacular designation of all the good things in God's creation, she compounds the aggressiveness of her first mention by repeating that word and adding the noun *vis* ('vit'):

Car volentiers, non pas envis,
Mist Diex en coilles et en vis
Force de generacion



8.42 *Jupiter and Io*,
from Ovid's *Métamorphoses*. Monnet/Le
Mire (§63: 1:48).

Par merveilleuse entencion,
Por l'espece avoir toute vive.

[For willingly, not begrudgingly, did God with marvelous understanding place in balls and in prick the force of generation in order that the species might survive through innocent renewal.]⁴¹

Seven centuries later, however, some editors of the *Roman de la rose* have still been unwilling to follow her example in explicitly naming such things, including André Mary in his modern translation of 1949.⁴² La Fontaine and Voltaire never use such language to make the point, but they test the limits of how explicit one can be without stylistic indelicacy.

Significant word play interacts with the illustrators' own variations in the case of two divergent renditions for a tale called "Le rossignol," which appeared in the "Fermiers Généraux" edition of La Fontaine's *Contes*. Catherine moves her bed from her parents' room to a place where she can listen to the nightingale; but this is just a pretext to enable her to meet with Richard. As a result the metaphorical nightingale "chantra toute la nuit" (the nightingale sang all night). Up to this point, this is a typical example of the manner in which the substantive illicitness of sexual adventures in the *Contes* is attenuated by the somewhat indirect but above all humorous style of their telling. It goes further, however, by giving the *rossignol* a prominent role in the scene the following morning when the lovers are discovered fast asleep by Catherine's father, who fetches his wife to witness this unusually picturesque situation:

Levez-vous, lui dit-il, et venez avec moi:
Je ne m'étonne plus pourquoi
Cataut vous témoignait si grand désir d'entendre
Le rossignol: vraiment ce n'était pas en vain;
Elle avait dessein de le prendre,
Et l'a si bien guetté qu'elle l'a dans sa main.⁴³

[. . . to his wife he went,
And said, "Get up, and come with me.
"At present I can plainly see
"Why Kate had such anxiety
"To hear the nightingale, for she
"To catch the bird so well has planned
"That now she holds him in her hand."
(La Fontaine, trans. Anon., 2:326)]



8.43 *Jupiter and Io*, alternate version (detail). Monnet/Le Mire (§63: 1:48).

The discretion of the orthodox illustration (figure 8.44), recognizing that in terms of decency this “nightingale” can be denoted only allusively and *a fortiori* certainly not pictured, is in visual conformity with the reticence of a text that states that the object to which the bird refers can be “used” *but not named*:

A cause du grand chaud nos deux amants, dormants,
 Etaient sans drap ni couverture,
 En état de pure nature;
 Justement comme on peint nos deux premiers parents;
 Excepté qu’au lieu de la pomme,
 Catherine avait dans sa main
 Ce qui servit au premier homme
 A conserver le genre humain;
 Ce que vous *ne sauriez prononcer* sans scrupule,
 Belles qui vous piquez de sentiments si fiers;
 Et *dont vous vous servez* pourtant très volontiers,
 Si l’on en croit le bon Catulle.
 (Id.; italics added)

[Excessive heat had made all clothes
 Unbearable. The sleeping pair
 Had cast them off, and lay as bare
 As our first happy parents were
 In Paradise. But in the place
 Of apple, in her willing hand
 Kate firmly grasp the magic wand
 Which served to found the human race,
 The which to name were a disgrace,
 Though dames the most refined employ it,
 Desire it, and much enjoy it,
 If good Catullus tells us true.
 (La Fontaine, trans. Anon., 2:325–26)]

The irony of this passage is based upon a perfectly serious if usually tacit

8.44 Lamblin, "Le rossignol." Eisen/Le Mire (§44: 2:295). 8.45 Lamblin, "Le rossignol," alternate version. Eisen/Le Mire (§44).





8.46 Lamblin, "Le rossignol." Picart (§5: 2:89).

institutional distinction between what people do and what can decently be printed, a significant gap that is often bridged by many forms of indirect allusion. The "uncovered" version, however, breaks down that delicate compromise by figurally "naming" the nightingale (figure 8.45). The story concludes with further puns on hands and singing: Richard promptly marries Catherine under the father's threat ("Sinon dites votre *In manus*")⁴⁴ and he, placated, in lieu of a blessing declares:

Enfants, le rossignol est maintenant en cage;
 Il peut chanter tant qu'il voudra.
 (Id.)

{The nightingale in cage is pent,
 May sing now to his heart's content.
 (La Fontaine, trans. Anon., 2:329)}

Picart in contrast takes a completely different, and textually more bizarre, approach, visually concretizing a metaphor that would seem to function only verbally: in the place of the unnameable object he puts a *literal* nightingale (figure 8.46). This allows him, however, to play at the same time on the illustrative convention of symbolizing sex by a dove, hardly distinguishable here from the nightingale.

Beyond the Pale

Besides these obvious modifications that yield two commercially useful versions of the same plate, there were sometimes completely separate alternative illustrations for a single edition, and one spectacular instance where a whole series of indecent engravings was executed complementary to the decent ones. It was for tandem editions of Boccaccio in Italian and French in 1757. Besides the complete, legitimate series of *Decameron* plates inserted in both language editions, there are twenty-one salacious ones adapted to appropriate stories.⁴⁵ For their type of engraving, they are unusual in their evident artistic quality, from which one would easily conclude even without outside information that although unsigned, as is almost universally the case with *galant* engravings, they came from the same workshops as the others. In fact, we know that these *estampes galantes* or *figures libres* were done by Gravelot, the edition's principal illustrator, under a separate commission from the publishers. His letter to them asking for a clear definition of their intentions is one of the rare documents of the period touching directly on such a question:

Ce que vous me demandez se peut faire, mais, pour rendre les choses suivant votre idée, cela exige de votre part une explication plus décidée et que je susse bien jusqu'à quel point je dois pousser la gaillardise; car, quoique dans ces sortes de compositions la gentillesse soit préférable à la grossièreté, il y a des gens, comme vous savez, à qui il faut des perdrix et d'autres qui aiment mieux la pièce de boucherie. Est-ce donc par la simple expression de la tête du jeune capucin que son action doit se faire connaître? Et la main sous sa robe fera-t-il [sic] assez sentir à quoi il s'occupe? En un mot, le bout de tabac doit-il paraître? . . . Quant au fini que vous désirez, je vous promets d'y apporter mes soins, et enfin de mettre à ces dessins toute la correction et l'expression dont je puis être capable; moyennant quoi je ne vois pas que je puisse demander moins de soixante francs pour chacun.⁴⁶

[What you ask of me can be done; but if I am to carry out what you have in mind, I will need a more specific explanation from you so I will know just how far the jollity is to go; for though in such compositions gentleness is preferable to coarseness, there are those, as you know, who must have partridges and others who would rather have raw meat. Is the young Capuchin's activity to be understood by facial expression alone? Will his hand under his robe suffice to indicate what he is up to? In a word, is the thing itself supposed to show? . . . As to the quality you desire, I promise to attend to that, that is, to put into these drawings all the polish and expression I am capable of; in consideration of which I do not think I could ask less than sixty francs for each.]

As there are different degrees of indecency, Gravelot, in keeping with his usual practice, indicates his preference for the suggestive over the crude. It would be interesting to know in what terms his correspondents instructed him that it was rather the latter they had in mind. Although there is no doubt that the *gaillardise* these plates convey is present in Boccaccio, the juxtaposition of the decent and indecent illustrations to the same tales is extremely instructive as concrete demonstration of the relative artistic independence brought to bear "on" a literary text. Although there are numerous interesting variations in approach, a couple of examples will make the essential point.

The bluntest method used is to sweep aside all veils and exhibit the sexual organs in plain view, particularly the erect phallus. For the story of Richard Minutolo⁴⁷—a version of which appears also in La Fontaine—Gravelot in the official version (figure 8.47) depicts Catella leaping from bed upon discovering that her partner is Richard rather than, as she believed, her husband. The illicit engraving (figure 8.48) exploits precisely the same instant in the action, mimicking the same body positions and decor but transposing them enough to provide frontal exposure of their genitalia. This scene is, incidentally, supposed to be taking place in a room dark enough to make confusion of identity plausible, but neither illustration attempts to render that fact except perhaps by suggesting the relative darkness that would obtain within the bed if the curtains were drawn. For whatever reason, this is in fact one of the least elegant plates in the series.

There is a greater degree of scenic transposition involved in the case of the barrel story,⁴⁸ from which La Fontaine was to draw "Le cuvier" for his own *Contes en vers*. (It is of course no accident that La Fontaine adapted so many of his *contes* from Boccaccio and Ariosto, and that theirs, with La Fontaine's, were favorite subjects for both publishers and illustrators of



8.47 Boccaccio, *Le Décaméron* (third day, sixth tale). Gravelot/Lempereur (§13: 2:65). 8.48 Boccaccio, *Il Decamerone* (third day, sixth tale). Gravelot/Lempereur (§12: 2:64).

the eighteenth century.) Boucher's plate shows us the moment in which Peronella reveals to her husband, who has just come in, that another man (her lover) is in their house: supposedly, he is merely inspecting a barrel he intends to buy (figure 8.49). Boucher has merely done what most illustrators of such tales do, namely, allude, without "naming" it, to the sexual nature of the encounter; and the device for achieving this is the displacement of the passage represented away from the sexual act itself. The indecent view, on the other hand, makes a point of representing the situation some moments later, when the husband is now inside the barrel scraping it out, while Peronella, leaning over it, accommodates the visitor in a manner that the text elaborates in this way (figure 8.50):

And while she stood in this position instructing and directing her husband, Giannello . . . went up behind Peronella, who, by standing there, was blocking off the mouth of the barrel, and just as the unbridled stal-



8.49 Boccaccio, *Il Decamerone* (seventh day, second tale). Boucher/Flipart (§12: 4:12). 8.50 Boccaccio, *Il Decamerone* (seventh day, second tale). Gravelot/Anon. (§12: 4:18).

lions of Parthia mount the mares in the open meadows when they are hot with love, so he, too, satisfied his youthful lust, reaching his climax at almost the same time as the scraping of the barrel came to an end. (Boccaccio, trans. Musa and Bondanella, 425)

This description is itself ironically underscored by a tailpiece that brings the comparison explicitly to life: a stallion is seen mounting a mare as Cupid gestures toward them.⁴⁹ Eisen, who in conceiving his illustration can take into account previous versions of both Boccaccio and La Fontaine relating to the same story, takes a more ambiguous path. He pretty much harks back to Boucher's disposition of the woman and the barrel (figure 8.51); but in following the second example of passage selection, he nonetheless suggests more than had Boucher. Although he masks the overt sexual act, he goes as far as hitching up Peronella's skirt in back. The Boccaccian quaintness of position is exactly what in this particular case makes



8.51 La Fontaine, "Le
cuvier." Eisen/Anon.
(§44: 2:215).

the matter of specific reference to the story perfectly direct, so that any indecency seems attributable more to the author of the story than to his more or less "faithful" illustrator.

The illustrator cannot always, however, and perhaps not often, manage equally well to capture an episode's distinctive qualities while simultaneously satisfying the willfully indecent prescription of the commissioning publisher. For instance, in one of Boccaccio's tales a certain Alessandro is lodged by an innkeeper in the only sleeping space available, which is on the floor in an Abbot's room: the primary illustration depicts the Abbot inviting Alessandro instead to share his bed (figure 8.52), an offer that he will accept with some reluctance. The Abbot's gesture, with his right hand partly beneath his nightshirt, slightly anticipates the secret of what is inside, and which the text will reveal only some moments later:

The Abbot placed his hand on Alessandro's breast and began to caress him the way young girls do their lovers, and Alessandro, who was

amazed at this, feared that the Abbott had been seized by some unnatural passion or else he would not have grabbed him in this manner. But either by intuition or from some movement on Alessandro's part, the Abbot immediately sensed Alessandro's suspicion and smiled, then, quickly opening his own shirt, he took Alessandro's hand and placed it upon his breast, saying: "Alessandro, get rid of that foolish idea; put your hand here and find out what I am hiding."

Alessandro placed his hand upon the Abbot's chest and discovered two nicely shaped little breasts, as firm and as delicate as if they had been carved out of ivory. (Boccaccio, trans. Musa and Bondanella, 78)

In fact, she is already in love with Alessandro; and since she turns out to be the princess of England, this is in every way a felicitous moment for



8.52 Boccaccio, *Le Décaméron* (second day, third tale). Gravelot/Martenasi (§13: 1:145).



8.53 Boccaccio, *Il Decamerone* (second day, third tale). Anon. (§12: 1:137). 8.54 Boccaccio, *Le Décaméron* (eighth day, first tale). Gravelot/Anon. (§13: 4:120).

the hero. Now, in the indecent “retake” of the illustration, virtually all circumstantial specificity of the story is sacrificed in favor of stark sexuality (figure 8.53). The engraving illustrates a somewhat later moment in the same episode; but the important thing is that it could practically serve for almost *any* story in the *Decameron* involving copulation, as a great many of them do; only accessory details, such as the pallet in the foreground, evidently refer to this particular plot. It seems to be a general rule that more detailed information in the decent illustration relates them directly to the text illustrated than is the case for the indecent ones.

Much the same is true with regard to the story of Gulfardo and Guasparuolo,⁵⁰ although here, in contrast to the previous examples, the two scenes illustrated are entirely distinct. Since the rule of the supplementary engraving is that it *must* focus in some way on the sexual scene, the artist enjoys much less freedom to characterize the story in the way that he might

otherwise judge most incisive. Given the constraints, it was all but impossible to *characterize* the persons depicted; their indispensable trait was not to be individualized but to be naked and sexually aroused. Except for the sword, which stands for Gulfardo's rank and perhaps for his designation as "soldier of fortune," the illustration (figure 8.54) bears no specific allusions to this particular story. In point of fact, the orthodox illustration (figure 8.55), in translating the spirit of the tale's punch line, depicts a moment not actually contained in the text—namely, the restitution of two hundred florins by Guasparruolo's wife—although it does *symbolize* her defeat and displeasure at having to surrender that money which had been the recompense of her favors. That problem is handled somewhat more happily with regard to the tale of the Abbess.⁵¹ The location of the scene in a convent is signaled by the rather spare cell, in contrast to the elegant interiors of



8.55 Boccaccio, *Le Décaméron*. Cochin/
Flipart (§13: 4:117).

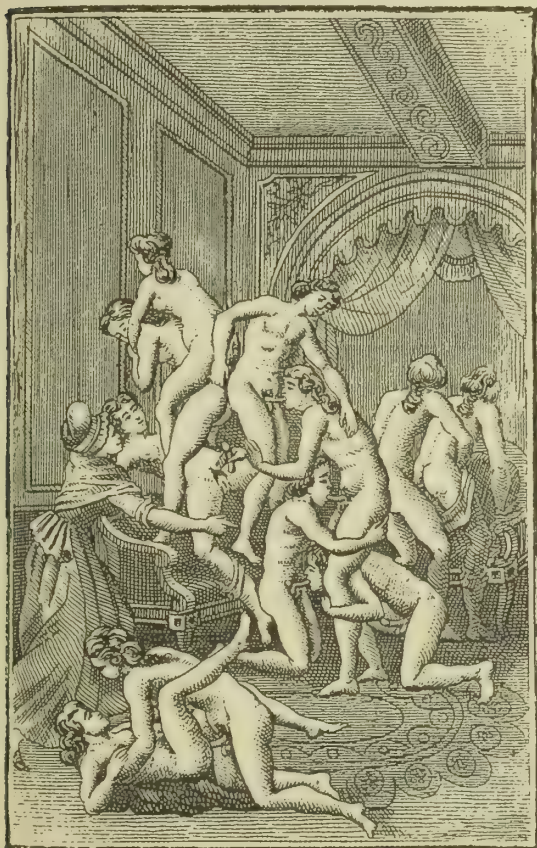


8.56 Boccaccio, *Il Decamerone* (ninth day, second tale). Gravelot/Anon. (§12: 5:16). 8.57 Boccaccio, *Il Decamerone* (ninth day, second tale). Gravelot/Le Grand (§12: 5:12).

most other illustrations, and the veil still worn by the nun even though she is in bed with her lover; other nuns are entering to catch them in the act (figure 8.56). The decent scene is totally different (figure 8.57): here, the embarrassed nun, still mostly undressed, is about to point out that the remonstrating Abbess has in haste pulled over her own head not her veil as she intended, but her own lover's pants. In short, much more information here relates details in the illustration to the text illustrated than is the case for the licentious engraving, reduced to the mostly genital essentials.

It is obvious, then, that in this special series of engravings only one thing really counts. Since the formal, censorial interdiction falls on genitalia, it is they which constitute the whole focus of the licentious engraving's existence. Other usual functions of illustration are distinctly secondary, in part because these scenes are complementary to the canonic illustrations that the viewers normally possessed as well. Because their overwhelming emphasis is on representing sex, Gravelot's extra plates share this consistent feature with a large number of other indecent engravings,⁵² although

they are from an artistic standpoint vastly superior to the typical production. They also contrast with much of the period's less elegant indecency in their essential monotony, or, to put it another way, the unfailingly routine posture of their sexual couplings. Boccaccio himself contrives a number of peculiar ways to configure things, but Gravelot never tries to embellish much on basic, straightforward mechanics; in contrast, most other erotic illustration from Aretino to Sade stresses the number of different arrangements imaginable (figure 8.58).⁵³ But in those cases, defiance of societal limits becomes a sort of absolute; taste is shocked rather than manipulated. That is why no illustration from Sade, so earnest in his offensiveness, will by itself help much to define for us the notion of decency. These particular illustrations of Gravelot's thus exemplify an intermediate range of representation, a "nice" kind of indecency: they are undeniably beyond the pale of what could be openly marketed, but in their avoidance of all suggestion of unnatural acts, they at least respect Christian assumptions of what constitutes "natural" sexual expression.



8.58 Sade, *Histoire de Juliette*. Anonymous illustration of 1797.

Coda

Perhaps, as observed at the outset, the prominence of the female body in so many forms is owing to the fact that engraving's purchasers were men; but stated in this way, the explanation is unbearably simplistic, accounting for too much and too little. It might be somewhat more satisfactory to say that æsthetic responses, whatever the sex of the viewer or purchaser, were conditioned by essentially masculine perspectives of desire. This, according to Linda Nochlin, has always been the case: "Man is not only the subject of all erotic predicates, but the customer for all erotic products as well, and the customer is always right. Controlling both sex and art, he and his fantasies conditioned the world of erotic imagination as well" (Nochlin and Hess 1972: 9). But the fact that we can uncover no specifically feminine erotic idiom does not automatically mean that female desire was unable to relate to the imagery in general use, even if this usage is considered one that was imposed, the only one available.

In any case, exploitation of the female figure in literary illustration entails a degree of specificity that differentiates its use from that found in other artistic media. Certain of the insistent motifs that there isolate the female body (such as Venus-Olympia) play virtually no role in illustration, which must be grounded in a denser narrative content. Others, such as Diana or Danaë, appear only to the extent authorized by, and in the company of, a classical text. This process in turn lends momentum to the inclination to understand the text in question as existing for that purpose. Thus the comic, in an illustrated *Orlando furioso*, seems to take second place to the erotic, and even a solid Christian classic such as *Jerusalem Delivered* comes to appear by dint of its illustrations as focused as much on conquests of women, good and evil, as of the Holy Land. For their illustrations have more in common with those of the *Decameron* and *La pucelle d'Orléans* than with, say, those of the *La Henriade* or *Gil Blas*.

From a survey of a considerable number of illustrations, what emerges is a repertory of topoi that seem noticeably insistent (whether one considers them as properly obsessive or not) as a cultural manifestation in both literature and illustration. A double selection contributes to their frequency: the choice of passages for illustration, and the way in which the illustration is conceived; and both of these are in part determined by conjectures about the public's taste. *Plaire* is hardly a less categorical imperative for the artist than the author, and a hardly less complex criterion. Moneyed purchasers had to be attracted, for whom plates were a prominent and often decisive ingredient of the lure. They or some other segment of the public also bought other, cheaper and cruder, kinds of illustrated books.

Tracing lines of filiation, whether synchronic or diachronic, between these many illustrations is of course not a comprehensive nor a rigorously deductive form of argument. Neither can the approach applied here claim to be exhaustive. A study that touches on only a small percentage of eighteenth-century engravings cannot claim to represent them all. The significance of "minor" works of art is never resolved by any kind of study that (and this includes most critical works) leaves them in the background. The isolation of a limited number of demonstrable motifs implies but does not wholly answer a systematic question, namely, what sort of taxonomy (if any) would be adequate to encompass the great variety of actual illustrations.

It inevitably follows that the determination of these motifs can be judged arbitrary. Indisputably, the engravings themselves have not been invented. If they have subjects at all, and these have meaning that is determined by something (more exactly by a combination of things), the important point to make is that they are not alone determined by the specific nature of the apparently originating literary text. But then one must either assume that the only other generating factor is the artists' fantasy, in which case no system (if not individually psychological) is possible; or one must view the determination in some totally different scientific framework, in which case no understanding of them has yet begun; or again, one must assume that their meaning is largely a fact of intertextuality. And if, for want of a more definitive approach, the latter is heuristically adopted, as it has been here, then one must posit the existence of topoi that endure over some span of time and collectively frame the repertory of most attractive choices available to the author or artist.

It is for this reason that this study ultimately is intrinsically related to the more general subject of cultural typology—specifically, in the artistic sphere, to iconology in the tradition of Erwin Panofsky. On many occasions

we have identified textual as well as visual allusions linking an archetype to various avatars. For convenience, I have called these, where mythology offered us a convenient label (but not to insist that the theme in play necessarily emanates from that specific personage), Diana, Andromeda, and so forth. The evidence for these relations is cumulative, and the intertexts in this event are of more than one sort. These topoi do not purport to convey any specific message about the culture under study, yet they relate in innumerable ways to a whole complex of motifs that one can identify at divers points in that culture. If erotic motifs, for example, are omnipresent in every historical period, they nonetheless evolve through different forms over time and thus present a challenge to those endeavoring to identify the specific *Geist* of a given *Zeit*. Those of the nineteenth century are certainly very different from those of the eighteenth, but not because, to continue the example, they are any more—or less—sexual.

The truths about the eighteenth century that may be conveyed in its illustrations are doubtless exceedingly complex ones. *Mutatis mutandi*, one could, I suppose, write much the same book based upon another century or another land, but the issues would lie in the relative weight of the *mutandi*: that is, just how many things would have to be changed in order to make the same argument fit a different set of data. I think this quantity would always be great, and to just that degree are the images of this century and culture specific to its own mythology and, if you wish, its own mentality.

Preface

- 1 There was already a considerable tradition of engraving in the seventeenth century: the Cabinet des Estampes of the Bibliothèque royale was formed in 1666 and a school of professional engraving at Les Gobelins in 1667 (Duportal 1914: iv).

1 *Text, Image, Allegory*

- 1 Attempts to construct a rigorous semiotics of images have always been hampered by the difficulty of working with the binary tools of linguistic analysis (contrasting features; presence or absence of a given feature) in an analogical medium: cf. Barthes 1982.
- 2 "In a given system, many things may comply with a single inscription" (Goodman 1976: 144).
- 3 I have not adopted here Bassy's distinction between "contiguous" and "analogical" relations (1974: 300–301), first because their selection lacks a certain instinctive clarity (they could arguably be used in reverse positions), and second because, as Bassy points out, the categories indeed overlap.
- 4 Also important is the degree to which selection of certain scenes for representation thereby "censures" others; cf. the remarks of Labrosse (1982: 97).
- 5 This is essentially the technique put to use in the popular game "What is wrong with this picture?" where the subset is limited to a fixed (contrived) number of propositions.
- 6 See Jean Sgard's inferences on this subject (1986: 33–34).
- 7 "There are, however, occasions when the presence of an instant is not incompatible with traces of a past instant; a face that is beginning to give way to joy is sometimes covered with tears of grief" (Diderot 1751: article "Composition en peinture").
- 8 The same is true of the early illustrations of James Thomson discussed by Ralph Cohen (1964: 261–65). Indeed simultaneity of widely disparate scenes is, as he points out, a spatial organization that, in this period at least, seems to be specific to illustrations; in painting, as Wendy Steiner observes, "the winding path was obviously a doomed narrative strategy for any painter intrigued by the burgeoning techniques of pictorial realism in the early quattrocento" (1988: 37). The quarto size of the Thomson plates, of course, allows several times as much room for detail as the octavo or

- duodecimo more typical of the engravings being treated here. Cohen's astute analyses show how much information can be extracted from such representations.
- 9 As Gréverand observes, the simultaneity of the illustration's communication is really just theoretical, since we obviously lack "a capacity to gather together in a unified way all the signifying elements of the image's world" (1983: 91); cf. Bassy 1983: 14.
 - 10 *Le petit prince, avec les dessins de l'auteur* (Paris: Gallimard, 1946), p. 9.
 - 11 This simplified characterization of the process does not, of course, imply that an equivalency between the two media is achieved, or that verbalization, implicit or otherwise, in itself resolved problems of ambiguity: cf. Goodman 1976: 235.
 - 12 Quoted by Aron Kibédi Varga (1984: 109–110).
 - 13 Bryson 1981: 127; cf. Steiner 1988: 12–13. Despite his excellent and extensive analysis of Greuze's textuality, Bryson says almost nothing about its relation to titles.
 - 14 *Life on the Mississippi*, chap. 44, quoted in Mitchell 1986: 40.
 - 15 "With pictures, although they are nonverbal, orientation of referential relationships is provided by established correlations with language" (Goodman 1976: 58).
 - 16 There are some interesting studies of the effects of the presence or absence of verbal support, mostly relating to journalistic or advertising images, in Guy Gauthier 1979.
 - 17 "If a narrative is implied in *The Progress of Love*, that narrative is viewer created (as opposed to artist determined), and it need not necessarily encompass all four panels or be limited to them. The scenes do not so much challenge viewers to order them in the correct sequence (the sequence privileged by the artist) as invite them to participate in the creation of a narrative by using both the painted scenes and any other scenes imagined to complement them" (Sheriff 1990: 93).
 - 18 *Pensées détachées sur la peinture*, in Diderot 1959: 765. This dependence is what Alain-Marie Bassy refers to as *ancrage*: "what is 'figured' can scarcely be interpreted without recourse to the literary text. The text alone explains the relationships" (1974: 300). Cf., too, Norman Bryson's remarks on the persistence of the text in the realist tradition, particularly that of historical painting (1981: 12).
 - 19 Only when the single frame is hypostatized as the "shot" can the film image, in turn, be conceived in terms of "iconography" (Kaplan 1983: 18).
 - 20 For example, this commentary by Fern Rusk Shapley on Benozzo Gozzoli's *Salome*: "There is a special freshness and *eagerness* in her body as she *gracefully alights* on one foot, her left hand *airily resting* on her hip and her right *darting up* in salute to King Herod" ("A Predella Panel by Benozzo Gozzoli," *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, February 1952, p. 78; quoted in Steiner 1988: 33; my emphasis).
 - 21 This is not to suppose even here an equivalence of word to image; for the painting, as Louis Marin remarks, "is what is talked about, but not what is said." Or, to put in another way, in both instances one could speak of another kind of equivalency, that of "truth as the imposture of fiction in the deceitful truth of *trompe-l'oeil*" (1971: 62, 71).
 - 22 The term applies to a narrator who is at the same time a character in the action related and derives from Gérard Genette's *Narrative Discourse* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980).
 - 23 Maria Mayenowa argues that icons are incapable of representing the gist of first- and second-person pronouns, negative propositions, and citation or "internal polemics" (1981: 134 and 137).
 - 24 Illustrative table of sciences and arts based on the *Encyclopédie*, by Chrétien Frédéric

- Guillaume Roth (*Essai d'une distribution généalogique des sciences et des arts principaux*, Welmar, 1769). This plate is found (in Duke's copy at least) in vol. I of the *Table analytique*, of 1780: see Diderot 1751.
- 25 Louis Doissin, in *La gravure* (§19), says for example of the Carracci, "The whole world admires your paintings and prints, proclaims their excellence and does not decide which object is most worthy of admiration" (52); and of one plate by Gaspard Duchange: "it is here that the burin can contest the paintbrush's beguiling power to provoke tears in a sensitive viewer, who discovers in the engraving all the expression, all the feeling, all the naturalness of the painting" (60).
 - 26 He attributes in particular to Corneille Vischer the ability to "give flesh the tenderness, the soft contours that the brush alone would seem able to effect, and that bring to his charming engravings the seductive effects of color and all the refinement of a real painting" (§19: 45); specifically, he credits him in a note with the ability to render *flesh tones* ("la véritable couleur de la carnation") through variation of line (§19: 39).
 - 27 "Irony in Hogarth—the interplay between the two textual levels—works as an instrument for subjecting the image to an absolute control by text: despite its apparent playfulness it is authoritarian, expropriative, and entirely anti-figural" (Bryson 1981: 150).
 - 28 Labrosse 1980: 139–40; cf. Gréverand's almost lyrical evocation of the myriad definitions of interrelation between the media (1983: 91).
 - 29 "Our reading is forever determined by the illustration; our imagination, through memory, is totally subjected to the illustrations first encountered chronologically and runs the risk of being deconcerted, disappointed, surprised or seduced by the unexpected element in new illustrations" (Gréverand 1983: 92).
 - 30 *Choix de chansons* (§40); Holloway 1969: fig. 65.
 - 31 In terms of a grammar including "the near and the far, the large and the small" that determines what Abraham A. Moles calls the hierarchy of signs (1972: 65), the ordering of a plate like *Le faucon* is anomalous by virtue of the fact that what is small is also more central to its meaning than what is large.
 - 32 This refers to his fig. 70, again from Laborde's songbook. Moles (see previous note) is temporarily content to describe the eye's procedure in scanning an image as "semi-determined."
 - 33 Comparing pictorial statements to linguistic ones, Sol Worth, after positing that although pictures refer, they cannot make propositions, lie, nor express negations or self-commentary, concludes that visual images are not structured in ways equivalent to language; "if pictures have no grammar in the strict linguistic sense, they [have] something like it: they have form, structure, convention and rules" (1975: 104).
 - 34 Of course, it does become relatively independent when detached from the text either for sale in a separate *recueil* (this often occurred for prestigious sets of engravings in the eighteenth century) or for purely visual appreciation by the intaglio collector. Still, one always knows that it has a special and original relation to some text.
 - 35 *Recueil d'estampes pour la Nouvelle Héloïse* (§71), incorporated in some copies of the first and subsequent editions of the novel. See the brief discussion of this question of legends by Claude Labrosse, Marie Mrozin'ska, and Alain-Marie Bassy in the sequel to Labrosse's paper on the Gravelot engravings (Labrosse 1982: 101–2): as Bassy points out, they need to be compared to a typology of legends found on other prints,

- which to a considerable degree they imitate. Labrosse elaborates astutely on the "voice" of the plate as extrapolated from the text (1985: 21–19). For a subsequent, systematic investigation of Rousseau's legends, see my article "*Julie et ses légendes*" (Stewart 1989a).
- 36 "Here the sentence itself is borne by the bubble, engraved by a sort of incisive stone that immobilizes the words that have just come from the character's open mouth" (Sgard 1988: 285).
- 37 The text of the "Sujets d'estampes" is included in the *Classiques Garnier* edition of *Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* (Paris: Garnier, 1960), liii–lxiii.
- 38 Rousseau had faced early the possible disparity between his detailed instructions and the likely outcome, in responding to Mme d'Houdetot on the subject of Marc-Michel Rey's preference for less elaborate illustrations than he had in mind: "Au reste, les détails dans lesquels je suis entré ne sont pas faits pour être exécutés à la lettre; ce n'est pas ce que le dessinateur doit rendre, mais ce qu'il doit savoir, afin d'y conformer son ouvrage autant qu'il est possible." Cited by François (1920: 11), date attributed 27 December 1757.
- 39 Letter of 19 January 1760 to François Coindet (no. 1223 in R. A. Leigh, ed., *Correspondance complète de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, vol. 8 [Geneva: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1969]). See, too, Alain-Marie Bassy's systematic analysis of the relations between text and figure for "La matinée à l'anglaise," another plate from this series (1974: 307–24).
- 40 Edward Hodnett 1982: 14. Cf., too, the remark of Alain-Marie Bassy: "the engraver and the illustrator express themselves according to a code, which is totally and radically irreducible to that of writing" (Labrosse 1982: 101).
- 41 See Michel's taxonomy (1987: 5–7 and annex 2).
- 42 Neither coincides with her allegory in the *Iconologie par figures*, according to which Raison, not Sagesse, is a helmeted and armed woman; and Sagesse's main attributes are a lamp and a thread (for finding her way in a labyrinth). The tree here may be an olive tree which, accompanying Raison, "announces that the fruit of this victory is peace of mind" (§37: 4:49 and 69).
- 43 As Canivet remarks: in the seventeenth century "artists hoped, for example through a code of allegories, to creat a universal language. But this outmoded code today is indecipherable and an explanatory commentary has become necessary" (1957: 1).
- 44 This series was later reissued in four volumes under the title *Iconologie par figures ou traité complet des allégories, emblèmes, etc.* (§37). It derives, of course, from a long tradition of emblem books, the most famous of which in the seventeenth century was doubtless Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*; cf. also J. B. Boudard's *Iconologie tirée de divers auteurs* (§14).
- 45 1972: 1064. As Bassy puts it, "The structure of the iconographic message is identical to the logical order of written expression" (1974: 305).
- 46 1980: 178. Claude Labrosse referred earlier, in a similar context, to "an ancestral symbolic discourse" (1982: 96–97). The symbolic classification can vary according to context, however; in the tableau of sciences presented in Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, engraving figures along with sculpture and painting on a branch deriving from Imagination, the source of fiction, whereas Memory gives rise to history.
- 47 §37: 3:63, Gravelot/Prévost.
- 48 Mémoire holds, for example, a pen and book in J. Baudouin's *Iconologie ou nouvelle*

explication de plusieurs images (Paris: Louis Billaine, 1677: 1:140), based on Ripa's *Iconologia*.

- 49 With regard to the function of engraving as metaphor, Claude Labrosse notes shrewdly a paradigm in the twelve *Julie* illustrations linking (visual representations of) the letter, the book of plates, initials carved in a rock, and an embroidered veil as "indices of the space in which traces are produced: of the activity of inscription" (1982: 96; also 1985: 214).
- 50 *Oeuvres et lettres*, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1953), 204; Descartes, trans. Anscombe and Geach, 243–44. Emphasis added.
- 51 There are a few known instances of women engraving, the best known of which is the diletantish attempts of the Marquise de Pompadour, but that has no effect on the fact of their absence from the workplace. There were, however, several female professionals in England.
- 52 I say "almost" because one does find examples of crossovers; Art, for example, is represented in the *Iconologie par figures* as a woman. There are few such exceptions, however, especially for such common nouns as *gravure*. To recognize this gender determination of the figure—usually stemming from Latin—is still, in the eyes of Londa Schiebinger, to beg the question: "The significance of these images runs deeper than the accidents of language" (1988: 673).
- 53 Although Erwin Panofsky chose to "revive the good old word 'iconology,'" he gave it a new meaning as part of a categorical distinction between "pre-iconographical description, iconographical analysis, and iconological interpretation" (1955: 32–33). My use of the term is a simple reprise of the eighteenth-century usage, not intended to qualify this study as representing iconology over against iconography: but Panofsky acknowledged, to be sure, that in practice these different enterprises "merge with each other into one organic and indivisible process" (39).
- 54 In context, this word has a predominantly rhetorical sense; in other words, it means metaphor.
- 55 Diderot 1751: *Supplément*, article "Allégorie" (1: 297).
- 56 This is in a separate article entitled "Allégorie, relatif aux arts de la parole," in *ibid.*, 298–301; it is attributed to Sulzer, *Théorie générale des beaux-arts* (i.e., it is taken from Johann Georg Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*, 2 vols., Leipzig, 1771–1774). Marmontel's article "Allégorie (Belles Lettres)" follows it (pp. 301–2).
- 57 Abbé Edme Mallet, article "Emblème" in *Encyclopédie*, vol. 5 (1755), 556. Alain-Marie Bassy has commented too on the relationship of emblems to fables, and of both to illustration (1986: chap. 1).
- 58 Virgil, trans. Lewis, 97.
- 59 Alain-Marie Bassy dates precisely from 1668, with the illustration of La Fontaine's *Fables*, the decisive transition from emblem to "description" (1973: 16). Although this demarcation—and his characterization of the thoroughness of the transformation—may be overly abrupt, the relative dates would not in themselves pose much of an interpretive obstacle.
- 60 Amsterdam: A. Wolfgang, 1671.
- 61 Cf. the bibliography given in the edition by Fabienne Gégou, *Lettre-traité de Pierre-Daniel Huet sur l'origine des romans* (Paris: Nizet, 1971), which is quoted here.
- 62 Diane Caniver's description of the plate is hardly decisive: "Minerva, on the left, presents a mirror to a young woman, lightly draped, facing her, accompanied by

two women companions and a child (Hercules?) bearing a club. One of the women holds her hand over the mouth of Mercury, who is in the center of the plate. On the ground at left, a banner bears the legend of the preface's title, *The Origin of Novels*, a lyre, a helmet. A low wall, crowned by two busts, separated this scene from a garden in the background. Clear at the back, a theatre where a play is being performed, and bearing overhead the title: *Zayde*, framed by two Cupids" (1957: 146, catalogue no. 115). In particular, the identification of Mercury, presumably on the grounds that he has a wing on the one visible foot, is rather arbitrary. The character *may* have a winged foot, but that is not indisputable; and even a quick comparison with other Hooghe plates in the same collection at the Cabinet des Estampes (Ec 50b, folio 25) turns up much more obvious Mercurys, usually with quite visible wings on their *helmets* and almost always bearing a caduceus. This figure, which may after all be a woman instead, could just as well represent, say, Renommée or some other notion conventionally airborne. Moreover, Canivet makes no attempt to resolve the meaning of the allegory.

- 63 Boudard §14: 3:190.
- 64 "*Conjugal fidelity* leans on the altar of wedlock, decorated with garlands" (§37: 2:53); for the ring, see Boudard §14: 2:25.
- 65 See Boudard §14: 3:84.
- 66 "Sometimes also *Prudence* wears a golden helmet, which signifies that the prudent man is able to resist the ambushes of fraud and perfidy" (§37: 4:43).
- 67 Roland Barthes calls this *ancre*: "the words are in this case fragments of a more general syntagm, on the same level as the images, and the unity of the message comes into being at a higher level: that of history, anecdote, diegesis" (1982: 33).
- 68 By the chevalier de Menilglaise, in Laborde §40: 3:44.
- 69 For a very similar plate and context, cf. "Promettre est un et tenir est un autre" [Promising is one thing and keeping it another] in La Fontaine §44: 2:294; Eisen's illustration once more belies the poem's content, in which Jean has promised to prove to Perette ten times over that "en fait d'amour il était grand sire" [when it came to love he was a lord]; but Perette "ne pouvant rien de plus obtenir, / Se plaint à Jean, lui dit que c'est grand'honte / D'avoir promis, et de ne pas tenir" [unable to get any more out of him, complained that it was shameful to have promised something he could not keep].
- 70 Claude Joseph Dorat, *Fables* 1772 (§22). Such allegories of truth (or history) and fiction are common in both verse and image: cf., for example, the opening poem and the Hayman/Ravenet frontispiece for Edward Moore's *Fables for the Female Sex* (§60).
- 71 5^e heure, "Nécessité d'aimer ou conseils à la jeunesse" (§51).
- 72 Thus Sol Worth's conclusion that "pictures operate both within the framework of language knowledge *within us*, and outside the framework of language *in itself*" (1975: 105) would have to be qualified in the case of allegory, which clearly must pass through a secondary, and explicitly linguistic, decodification.

2 *The Dramatic Impulse*

- 1 Claude Labrosse refers to the *théatralité* of illustrations, but without articulating this relationship (1982: 90); in his commentary, Alain-Marie Bassy notes, with regard to Rousseau's "Sujets d'estampes" descriptions (§71), that they obey a different codi-

- fication: "one could say that it is a 'dramatic' codification: it is in effect a staging comparable to what takes place in the theatre" (Labrosse 1982: 101). As Bassy remarks more generally elsewhere, "For illustrators the theatre constitutes the very model of discursive representation: thus the costumes, decors, wonders and monsters that inhabit these illustrations often have the dusty smell of backstage" (1984: 151).
- 2 Perhaps the best demonstration of this intimate linkage is to be found in an article by Roger W. Herzog, "The Décor of Molière's Stage: the Testimony of Brissart and Chauvau," *PMLA* 93, no. 5 (1978): 925–54. It was already clearly suggested, however, by Jeanne Duportal: see her section entitled "Rapports avec le théâtre et les autres arts" (1914: 306–21).
 - 3 See the critical edition of *Sophonisbe* by Charles Dédéyan (Geneva: Droz, 1945), p. 115.
 - 4 The relationship of the historical anecdote to the notion of tableau is the key to the "supreme fiction" elaborated in chap. 2 of Fried 1980.
 - 5 Holloway asserts that "gesture is the weakness of an illustrator" (1969: 10); he seems to believe, quite wrongly I feel, that the illustrator's strength, in contrast, is (facial) expression.
 - 6 *Oeuvres romanesques* (Paris: Garnier, 1962), p. 785. Bénac notes that Diderot had contributed this story along with the *Entretien d'un père avec ses enfants* to Gessner's 1773 edition (id., p. 309, n. 542); Jean Varloot includes the original plate (dated 1772), quite similar to this one from a 1776 English edition, and others from Gessner's edition in 1985: 47–51. Gessner discusses his artistic endeavors in his "Lettre sur le paysage, à Fueslin," included in several French editions of his works (§35: 2:253–62).
 - 7 In §36: 4:238 the plate—unlabeled here—bears the legend: "Elle voit, elle crie, elle tombe à la renverse" [She sees, she cries out, she collapses] (engr. Girardet).
 - 8 §36: 4:246 (engr. Girardet); it corresponds to this passage: "Le jeune militaire tire son épée, s'avance sur Félix; M. de la Rançonnières accourt, s'interpose, saisit son garde. Cependant le militaire s'empare du fusil qui était à terre, tire sur Félix, le manque" [The young soldier drew his sword and advanced toward Felix; M. de la Rançonnières hurried up, stepped between them, and siezed the guard. Then the soldier grabbed the rifle on the ground and fired at Felix, missing him] (p. 788).
 - 9 In *Oeuvres de Prévost* (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1978–1986), 1:99 and 1:301.
 - 10 Cf. a similar deathbed scene by Eisen/Guttenberg in *La Duchesse de Châtillon*. It is difficult to cite meaningful references to these illustrations because of the profusion of d'Arnaud editions and the variances in the illustrations inserted in them. My specific examples are drawn from a set of his works in the Duke University library, ostensibly dated 1815, but in fact consisting of various imprints described in Dawson 1976: 2:632–33.
 - 11 Cochin/Ponce and Cipriani/Bartolozzi, both in §2.
 - 12 *Les nuits* (Paris: Le Jay, 1770); the engraving appears to be signed Tavernard and comes perhaps from an English edition; the text comes from lines 205–6 of the first night.
 - 13 For a learned and general discussion of this subject, and of *Liebman* in particular (with emphasis upon the important relation of *Liebman* to Pygmalion), see Dawson 1976: 1:363–459.
 - 14 This would hardly be appropriate in classical tragedy, yet was presumably an allusion

- to some actual play, as the poem suggests: "Voulez-vous qu'une Amante, au milieu des ténèbres, / Prête à se réunir à ces manes funèbres, / Médite en éclatant un sinistre dessein, / Et se plonge, avec art, un poignard dans le sein?" (§21: 78) [Would you like to see a beloved woman, amidst the shadows, about to join the funereal shades, to conceive in her throes a sinister design and artfully plunge a knife into her breast?].
- 15 §10: 53–58. According to Berquin, the story is based on a passage from Jean François de Saint-Lambert.
 - 16 A third version by Queverdo/Villerey will be found in A. C. Cailleau, *Lettres et épîtres amoureuses d'Héloïse et d'Abélard* (Paris: Didot jeune, 1796), 1:73.
 - 17 Book 8, in *Oeuvres* (Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1978–86), 1:172. The illustration is the vol. 2 frontispiece in the 1810 edition (§66) and corresponds to a passage on p. 61.
 - 18 §55: 2:367–68. Such a theme, to be sure, is almost never *new*; cf. Canivet's fig. 41 (a plate for Desmarests de Saint-Sorlin's *Ariane* of 1639), which she describes as follows: "In a cave: Emilie, disguised as a man, wants to take vengeance on Mélinte, seated in chains on the ground. She is holding a torch and a dagger. Behind them, soldiers at the entrance" (Canivet 1957: 110). A motif's importance, as always, is relative, and here depends upon the number of similar echoes in contemporary illustrations.
 - 19 Cf. also from d'Arnaud (§3) the frontispiece by Marillier/Lingée for *Le prince de Bretagne* (dated 1776).
 - 20 See Robert Rosenblum, "Caritas Romana after 1760," in Nochlin and Hess 1972: 43–59.
 - 21 "Réflexions préliminaires," quoted here from a later edition of §25 (La Haye: Delalain, 1780), p. 25.
 - 22 See, for example, the frontispieces to parts 7 and 8, reproduced in the Cercle du Livre Précieux edition, 1959. Similarly convincing examples after Cochin are to be found in §77, 1: frontispiece, 1:94, and 2:66.
 - 23 The same is true of Eisen/Le Mire's hellish figure for the sixth canto of Montesquieu's *Le temple de Gnide*, §58.
 - 24 There is also a Le Barbier/Baquoy plate, in a much more classical pose (§34: 2:143), and a Monnet/Le Tellier plate in the 1786 edition (copy in the Rosenwald collection of the Library of Congress).

3 *The Intervisual Paradigm*

- 1 Alain-Marie Bassy, for example, recognizes the "mythification" operating on certain literary works by their illustrative "posterity" (1973: 27, 31) but does not mention this partially autonomous level on which plates unrelated by reference to a common text themselves perpetuate a myth. Bryson's *Word and Image* constitutes a powerful argument in favor of assimilating by virtue of a shared topos works that are stylistically dissimilar (1981: 240).
- 2 This conclusion bears a striking resemblance to Charles Mauron's theory of the function of comedy in *Psychocritique du genre comique*: "Mais dès que la farce se fait moins brutale ces satisfactions tendancieuses ne sont plus autorisées que sous le couvert de travestissements ou d'allusions. Elles passent en contrebande, et le plaisir de tromper le douanier avec son approbation, voire son invitation pressante, joue un rôle essentiel" (1964: 41).

- 3 Francastel 1930: fig. 40.
- 4 "Le Curé et le mort." La Fontaine himself draws on several possible sources for his subject; see the commentaries of Henri Regnier to the Grands Ecrivains de la France edition of the *Oeuvres*, 2: 145–50 (Paris: Hachette, 1884).
- 5 For example one by Jean-Baptiste Huet, in Burollet 1980: no. 57.
- 6 Burollet 1980: no. 27; engraved by Nicolas Ponce in 1787.
- 7 Cf. the similar subject of *Le juge ou la cruche cassé* (Debucourt/Le Veau, 1782) described in Fenaille 1899: 1.
- 8 Bibliothèque nationale, Cabinet des Estampes.
- 9 It is imitated in less delicate style by Philibert Louis Debucourt in a color plate called *Heur et malheur ou la cruche cassée* (Dodgson 1924: pl. 76).
- 10 §44: 2.291; text from *Contes et nouvelles en vers* (London, 1778), (4: 225–27).
- 11 Cf. Burollet 1980: no. 156.
- 12 In one illustration for Boccaccio (Gravelot/Moitte §13: 3:167) the mirror clearly stands for truth: in the tale Cesca is told that, given her repulsion by unpleasant people, she had best not look in the mirror.
- 13 Anonymous illustration to the original chap. 28, "La petite jument," in the 1748 edition (§18: 1:333). "C'était en somme une assez jolie bête; douce surtout: on la montait aisément; mais il fallait être excellent écuyer pour n'en être pas désarçonné" (Diderot, *Les bijoux indiscrets*, in *Oeuvres romanesques*, Paris: Garnier, 1962, p. 112).
- 14 Charles François Lebrun's translation into French, which Gravelot's illustrations accompanied when it was first published in 1774 (Paris: Musier fils), although they had appeared in an Italian edition in 1771. The rose was just previously developed in the text as a symbol of pleasure, expressed in the song of a bird: "Cueillons la rose dès ce matin, le soir elle sera fanée: cueillons la rose d'amour."
- 15 *Le thème du miroir dans la poésie française (1540–1815)* (Université de Lille III, Service de Reproduction des Thèses, 1975).
- 16 The description of the plates is not translated by Keene, but the lines of verse with which each description closes are from the poem and are thus here from his translation (Favre, trans. Keene, 41).
- 17 Two prints on this theme: Jollain/Bonnet (Salaman 1913: pl. 40) and, in a dressed (*déshabillé*) but witnessed mode, Baudouin/Ponce (Dilke 1902: 1; and Gusman 1921: pl. 19).
- 18 Cf. n. 16.
- 19 Cf. Thomas Rowlandson's "Curious Wanton," a woman looking at her vulva in a mirror held by another woman (she is accompanied by a dog standing on his hind feet, a frequent connotator of sexual excitement), in Schiff 1969: pl. 19.
- 20 The source of this ditty, according to Emmanuel Bocher, is Charles Simon Favart's 1741 comic opera "La chercheuse d'esprit" (*Les gravures françaises du XVIIIe siècle*, Paris: Librairie des Bibliophiles, 1875–1882, vol. 2).
- 21 Compare Marmontel's description, in *La neuvième de Cynthère*, of breasts to "... deux globes d'albâtre / Dont les sommets, à la rose pareils, / Du doux baiser sont les trônes vermeils" (Chant 2, vv. 130–32. Ed. by James Maurice Kaplan in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 113 [Banbury: The Voltaire Foundation, 1973]).
- 22 Engr. Bouillard and Dupréel, Girodie 1927: pl. 28.
- 23 According to David Kunzle, the last third of the century sees a significant iconographic development of the corset, especially the *essai du corset*, in combination with

- the established *toilette* theme ("The Corset as Erotic Alchemy," in Nochlin and Hess 1972: 91–165). An extensive background to the subject is provided in his *Fashion and Fetishism: A Social History of the Corset, Tight-Lacing and Other Forms of Body-Sculpture in the West* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1982).
- 24 Aubert/Duflos, 1755 (Bibliothèque nationale, Cabinet des Estampes), reproduced as illustration no. 18 in Pierre Carlet de Marivaux, *Journaux et oeuvres diverses* (Paris: Garnier, 1979).
 - 25 In Schall's *L'attente*, a painting (apparently) included by Roberts (1974: pl. 29) but without indication of source, the nude on the bed seems to be reading a letter while holding a watch in her left hand.
 - 26 To be sure, there are quite innocuous *liseuses* to be found, such as the Greuze copy or imitation (Burolet 1980: no. 41), and Fragonard's well-known painting at the Washington National Gallery. And books can also be presumed to deal sometimes with nonfictional and nonerotic matters: the *liseuse* by Marie Marc Antoine Bilocq (Burolet 1980: no. 5) would appear to be doing serious literary or philosophical reading (given that there are other books on the table, and a bust perhaps of Homer). An illustration by Marillier for Matteo Boiardo's *Roland l'amoureux* appears to correspond to the passage where Angélique falls asleep on the grass while reading the book of Maugis, and Roland comes upon her there (engr. Louis Michel Halbou, in §53, no. 20; this engraving seems to have been part of a series to illustrate the 39-volume anthology of *Voyages imaginaires*, 1787–1795, edited by C. G. T. Garnier). In portraits, books are a sign of culture; Mme de Pompadour, Marie-Antoinette and countless others had themselves portrayed with books in hand (cf. Sutton 1968: fig. 334).
 - 27 Black and white reproduction in Sutton 1968: fig. 312, and in Martin and Chartier 1984: 418.
 - 28 "Troublée par sa lecture, la lectrice s'abandonne, la tête inclinée sur un coussin, le regard chaviré, le corps languide. A coup sûr, son livre était un de ceux qui émeuvent les sens et excitent les imaginations: par son tableau, le peintre fait effraction dans l'intime féminin" (Roger Chartier and Daniel Roche, "Les pratiques urbaines de l'imprimé," in Martin and Chartier 1984: 418).
 - 29 *S/Z* (Paris: Seuil "Points," 1970), p. 145.
 - 30 Boucher/Demarteau, Jean-Richard 1978: no. 783.
 - 31 It appears there may be a novel on the floor too in a Lavreince/Launay print entitled *L'heureux moment*; there is also in it a misplaced shoe under the dog. For an English derivative, even less subtle, see Isaak Cruikshank's *Luxury* (1801) in Wagner 1986: fig. 117.

4 Visual Disclosures

- 1 The term was used to refer to a courageous woman, and to a type of dress (see n. 16 below). It does not occur to Rousseau, however, to use such a term in relation to Sophie d'Houdetot's androgynous attraction; though her costume is important, she is described as "en bottes" at her first visit to Montmorency and "en homme" at the second; "Quoique je n'aime guère ces sortes de mascarades, je fus pris à l'air romanesque de celle-là, et pour cette fois ce fut de l'amour" [Although I don't like this sort

- of masquerade, her romantic flair caught my fancy, and this time it was love] (*Oeuvres complètes* [Paris: Gallimard, 1959], 2:432 and 439).
- 2 "Her brow was set with pride; she liked to affect a rough appearance; but however rough, her features were ever pleasing" (§79: 1:52, my trans.).
 - 3 Rupprecht 1974: 289–90. Rupprecht notes too that several legends of the martial maid type entail a doubling of the maid figure (the second of which can "carry the androgynous values on to future development"), or splitting to a brother-sister relationship (twins): in Ariosto we have both, Bradamante/Ricciardetto and Marfisa/Ruggiero, which permits an extraordinary series of errors and substitutions. "These sets of identical opposite sex twins function as embodiments of the androgynous idea which cannot be comprehended within a solitary figure."
 - 4 The heroine has similarly distinct breasts in the frontispiece by Carême/Godefroy for d'Ussieux's *Clémence d'Entragues*, although her citizens, whom she has rallied against the Ligue, at first did not recognize her when she appeared in armor: "Elle se hâte de cacher les grâces de sa taille élégante et majestueuse tout ensemble, sous l'airain d'une pesante cuirasse" [Hastily she hid the charms of her elegant and majestic bodice beneath the bronze of a heavy breastplate] (§82, p. 192).
 - 5 Interestingly, since she is motivated by love, she is compared to an opposing transvestite, "Alcide travesti en femme [qui] maniait la quenouille et le fuseau." Fairfax's translation of Tasso here—"Meanwhile her vesture, pendant to her feet, / Erminia doft, as erst determined she, / Stripped to her petticoat the virgin sweet / So slender was, that wonder was to see . . ." (stanza 91)—evokes her unclad beauty without the specific chain of reference *parure/ornement/trésor* of the French translation being illustrated, as does the original: "Erminia intanto la pomposa vesta / Si spoglia, che le scende insino al piede, / E in ischietto vestir leggiadra resta / E snella sì, ch'ogni credenza eccede" (*Opere*, Milan: Rizzoli, 1963, 3:206).
 - 6 Caylus's translation of Giovanni Ambrogio Marini's *Il Calloandro sconosciuto* (1652) had already appeared in 1740 and was to figure in a collection of Marini's *Romans héroïques* in 1788: cf. Angus Martin et al. 1970: 330.
 - 7 Ariosto, trans. Gilbert, 3:8.
 - 8 Ariosto's "*Orlando Furioso*": *Selections from the translation of Sir John Harington* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), p. 74.
 - 9 An ambiguous case is Gravelot's illustration for the twelfth book of Honoré Urfé's *L'Astrée* (§81: 1:552, engr. Gravelot), where Méandre combats Lipandas: they have both removed their armor (at Lipandas's suggestion), and one breast appears to be exposed; yet in her narration Méandre seems to hedge as to whether her identity as a woman, or as Méandre specifically is evident to the others at this time.
 - 10 In an allegory, where narrative suspense is in no way relevant, the situation might be different. Cochin does represent Minerva in a breastplate in *Mémoires de l'Académie royale de chirurgie* (Paris: Osmont, 1743; see Michel 1987: fig. 37 and catalogue no. 34a).
 - 11 "As at the starting point a race-horse that awaits the signal to leave at full speed and cannot hold his feet still either here or there, is seen to swell his nostrils and stretch out his ears, so the courageous woman, who does not imagine this is Ruggiero with whom she is fighting, as she waits for the trumpet, seems to have fire in her veins and cannot remain in one place" (Ariosto, trans. Gilbert 2: 804–5); cf. Bradamante's

- earlier assertion that she wants to joust only with Rogero (canto 35, stanza 76). See as well the unsigned plate for canto 46, where Leon reveals Rogero's identity to his sister Marfisa and Charlemagne.
- 12 The same approach characterizes the plate to canto 20: Renaldo (who already knows who she is) is removing Armida's armor to provide her physical relief; its many, essentially unidentifiable parts are strewn about, and she is down to a partly opened undershirt.
 - 13 In order not to frighten them, she reveals her sex ("Hermione greets and reassures them, uncovering her fair eyes and blond hair"), although it remains somewhat uncertain whether they immediately understand.
 - 14 There is a similar Monnet/Dupréel plate serving as frontispiece to a later *Pucelle* edition (§88).
 - 15 Although Jeanne d'Arc was not canonized until 1920, it is safe to say that she was revered centuries earlier (Jean Chapelain, for example, refers to her as "la sainte bergère" in the first canto of his *La pucelle* of 1656), and that this sanctity is an essential element of what Voltaire was mocking.
 - 16 Louvet de Couvray, *Les amours du chevalier de Faublas*, in *Romanciers du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), 2:427. The right and left hands referred to in the caption are in fact reversed in the illustration—a not too uncommon mistake owing to the fact that engraving is, like printing, a transfer technique.
 - 17 This is the last scene of the play, where Julie produces the rings she and Proteus once exchanged.
 - 18 Berquin cites (David) Mallet (*The Hermit*, 1747) as the source of his tale; it had already been adapted by Aimé Ambroise Joseph Feutry (*L'hermitage*) in 1768.
 - 19 Paris: Ledoux, 1801; see the plate by Binet/Bovinet in Lévy (1973: 186–87).
 - 20 Rosambert, for just this reason, stops him just in time. The words of the caption ("Bien! il faut le tuer!") are those of the Marquise d'Armincourt, which have provoked Faublas.
 - 21 Marguerite Gérard was a sister-in-law of Fragonard, born like him in Grasse, and may have had help from him on some of her early productions; but there is no way of knowing whether that has any bearing on the case.
 - 22 The possibility of reversing this traditional privileging of the male vantage point is seen by E. Ann Kaplan as a recent achievement of the cinema (1983: 29).

5 *Diana, or the Voyeurs*

- 1 The implication is that the (hot) chocolate has some tonic properties and is good for the lungs.
- 2 "In the age of the Rococo," asserts David Kunzle, "the bibli-classical heroine becomes a woman of fashion, who moves indoors to take her bath, dress and undress"; this change corresponds also with the replacement of the classically solid nude by women of fashionable slenderness (1972: 91).
- 3 §48: 52; the passage comes near the end of the first chapter. Cf. the much more sensual, fin-de-siècle Daphnis and Chloe bathing scene by Prud'hon/Roger in Réau 1928: pl. 56.
- 4 §56, canto 2. This text is quoted from the expanded version of 1768 entitled *La Nouvelle Zélis au bain* (§57), where it is canto 5.

- 5 This passage is skipped in the Keene translation, which is so freely adapted as to be unreliable.
- 6 Keene's free translation, however, misses this point: "How the waves bear down upon her! These pure waters which caress her; coming from her, they must burn you!" In the passage quoted below I have abandoned the Keene version, which does not follow closely the phrasing of the original.
- 7 Cf. Le Barbier's interesting and dramatic rendition of Daphnis pulling Chloe from the water by moonlight for Gessner's *Mirtil et Thyrsis* (§34: 1:53).
- 8 Engraved by Noël Le Mire (§63: 1:13). Although there are numerous well-known *baigneuses* paintings not tied to a mythical topos, which as Beatrice Farwell asserts "arose neither out of the iconography of the classical nude bather, nor from that of the Biblical heroines of the Renaissance and the Baroque, but from the latter tradition's subsequent transformation into the anonymous and contemporary during the eighteenth century" (1972: 67), the prevalence of subjects identical or similar to the ones treated here in illustration is such that her conclusion cannot be taken as valid in general.
- 9 Simon Vouet had portrayed a proud Diana at the same precise moment in his *Bain de Diane* (Petit Palais) in the early seventeenth century.
- 10 Such is the perspective of Bernard Picart's *Actéon*, which leaves Diana barely visible in the background (La Barre de Beaumarchais, §39: no. 21).
- 11 The *découvert* version of the Boucher/Demarteau plate was executed first, *avant la lettre*, according to Jean-Richard (1978: no. 632).
- 12 Cf. Boucher's *Diana and Endymion* at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.
- 13 The description of the plates is not translated by Keene, but the lines of verse with which each closes are drawn from the poem, and thus from the translation (30).
- 14 In a sense, Marillier thus makes visual a verbal comparison in the scene of Musidora's bathing in James Thomson's *The Seasons*: "With fancy blushing, at the doubtful breeze / Alarmed, and starting like the fearful fawn" ("Summer," vv. 1319–20). Eisen's 1759 illustration of Damon's spying on her at this moment (Cohen 1964: fig. 29) offers us a good example of the different comparative values such an image can take on in various critical contexts: for viewed in contrast with other editions of Thomson, it is a novel event that, according to Ralph Cohen, "set the model for later English editions; but compared with the other French illustrations being considered here, especially those by Eisen, it is almost indistinguishable from scenes in Botticelli, La Fontaine, and so forth"—which is just the point of the French thematic similarities being stressed here.
- 15 Cf. Bernard Picart's plate of the same subject in La Barre de Beaumarchais's *Le temple des Muses* (§39: no. 32).
- 16 There is a Boucher/Larmessin plate from 1743 of *Le fleuve Scamandre*, and a 1761 reprise engraved by Jean Daullé under the title *La baigneuse surprise* (Jean-Richard 1978: no. 583).
- 17 Marillier/de Ghendt, §73: 3:194.
- 18 Cf. the allusion by Diderot to a Suzanna (by Giuseppe Cesari) who "pour se dérober aux regards des vieillards . . . se livre entièrement aux yeux du spectateur" (*Salon de 1765*, in *Salons*, ed. Jean Seznec and Jean Adhémar [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960], 2:66).

- 19 Antoine Sabatier de Castres, *Dictionnaire de littérature*, article "Érotique" (Paris: Vincent, 1770), 2:110.
- 20 Engr. Charles Melchior Descourti, in Girodie 1927: pl. 33.
- 21 Boccaccio, *Decameron*, trans. Musa and Bondanelle: eighth day, seventh story (513).
- 22 See also Picart's plate of the same subject in *Le temple des Muses*, §39: no. 33.
- 23 Voltaire, *Romans et contes* (Paris: Garnier, 1960), 234.
- 24 The illustration of La Fontaine's "Un cas de conscience" by Eisen also features a woman watching a naked male bathing: see both covered and uncovered versions of this plate in Ray 1982: 1:57.
- 25 The italics, which are in the text, designate set expressions from the vocabulary of preciosity.
- 26 See Adhémar 1963: 101.
- 27 Referenced by the Bibliothèque nationale as 2:272 in the 1776 (= 1784) edition. The engraving is unsigned, as is not infrequent in Restif's texts, but is almost certainly by Louis Binet, whose style, so compatible with Restif's, made him his illustrator of choice: "Notes from Restif to Binet tell us that the writer guided the artist's hand and that the latter docilely scraped and erased his drawings until Restif was satisfied with the result" (Lafarge 1988: 94). Actually, this engraving does not appear to coincide with any of Jacob's listed illustrations (P. L. Jacob, *Bibliographie et iconographie de tous les ouvrages de Restif de la Bretonne* [Paris: Auguste Fontaine, 1875], 133). The painter as privileged voyeur figures also in the illustration for "Le modèle," 39th story in Restif's *Les contemporaines* (§68: 6:480).
- 28 Referenced by the Bibliothèque nationale as 1:139; it thus appears to coincide with Jacob's listing in the 1776 (= 1784) edition of illustration no. 14, *Tiennette à l'auberge*, 1:138 (see previous note), that is, letter 30 in part 1.
- 29 *Signature of the Visible* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 1.
- 30 Cf. Baudouin's equally conventional little tableau *Annette et Lubin* (Burollet 1980: no. 116).
- 31 Cf. Cochin's 1743 illustration of the tale, adapted from Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron* (Holloway 1969: no. 121), and a print by Lancret/de Larmessin (Gusman 1921: pl. 41).
- 32 Candace Clements (1982) has discussed the degree to which the illustrations of La Fontaine quote each other from one edition to the next, and how the theme for most of the *Contes* was therefore fixed by the first illustrator, namely, Romeyn de Hooghe in a 1685 edition (Amsterdam: Desbordes).
- 33 An argument against the purely literal—or as Alain-Marie Bassy puts it, "realist"—understanding of Oudry's plates for the *Fables* is to be found in Bassy 1982. In the discussion following his paper, nonetheless, he concedes the problem posed for the illustrator by a literary subject that is *already* allegorical: "La Fontaine more or less cut the ground out from under his illustrators, and contributed—to use an uncouth neologism—to the 'disallegorization' of the fable genre, to removing little by little all value from visual allegory" (207).
- 34 For the Cochin engraving, see Holloway 1969: fig. 121; the 1883 engravings of Fragonard's drawings by Martial (Adolphe Martial Potémont) can be seen in La Fontaine, *Contes* (Paris: Editions L.C.L., 1965).
- 35 See the many examples given by Holloway 1969: 70–74 and figs. 197–230, and my own discussion of the subject in Stewart 1978.

- 36 Henri de Castille, being impotent, asks Alphonse to provide him with a son by his sensual wife Henriette, the Portuguese Infanta. Alphonse is only too happy to oblige, especially since in his own camp he has tired of waiting for Sandoval's favors. But when Sandoval changes her mind, she finds Alphonse too exhausted from his other duties; and when his other role is discovered, he almost loses his life to the Inquisition.
- 37 Donald Posner cites the same engraving under the title *Le curieux* among the fascinating variations of the theme developed in his article "Watteau's *Reclining Nude* and the 'Remedy' Theme" (1982). A similar subject by Schall/Chaponnier is entitled *La servante officieuse* (Girodie 1927: pl. 11); still another by Lavreince/Dequevauviller is more paradoxically called *Le contretemps* (Bibliothèque nationale, Cabinet des Estampes).
- 38 Pierre Vidal-Naquet has argued for the existence since Greek times of an association of the myth of woman with that of the slave (*Le chasseur noir*; English translation: *The Black Hunter: Forms of Thought and Forms of Society in the Greek World* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986]).

6 *The Passive Vessel*

- 1 Rousseau, *Julie ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, part I, letter 26.
- 2 For a discussion and some useful references concerning this subject and its relations to literature, see Rex 1987: 39–44.
- 3 See, for example, the headpiece by George Bickham to John Mottley's "The Dream" in *The Musical Entertainer* §11: 1:97. It is an odd illustration for the song, in that it is the male who is supposed to be dreaming of Celia, unless there is a hint that she "sleeps" as a convenient solution to her quandary over voluntary consent to his advances: "Sad she appeared, yet smiling too, / Willing and yet afraid: / She blushed and knew not what to do." It is indeed typical that when one character dreams of another, it is the male who dreams: cf. Holloway 1969: figs. 20, 61, 92, and the Le Barbier/Halbou plate for canto 12 of Tasso's *Jérusalem délivrée*, §79.
- 4 Santerre/Château, untitled, 1710 (Bibliothèque nationale, Cabinet des Estampes, Da.53.a.f^o4).
- 5 See, for example, Jean-Richard 1978: nos. 361, 378, 382, 657, 713, 714, 739, 930, 1158, 1423, 1540.
- 6 Cf., for example, the Correggio painting to which the Louvre gives the uncertain title: *Vénus endormie contemplée par un satyre, dit le sommeil d'Antiope*.
- 7 §13: 3:3 (fifth day, first story). Cf. the interesting juxtaposition in Ray 1982: 5, of this illustration with an earlier one by De Hooghe in a totally different style: there she is almost totally nude, although there is no real pretext for it, and the servants are included in the picture.
- 8 "Le troupeau désaltérée," §8: 1:41.
- 9 See, for example, Lavreince's teasing *L'Amour frivole* (Burolet 1980: no. 64), where the tip of a cane extended by a man reaching in through the door is lifting the veil from a woman sleeping in a chair.
- 10 Augustin Piis, "Portrait de Sophie," in *Chansons nouvelles*, §65: 25; the accompanying illustration is by Le Barbier/Gaucher.
- 11 Eisen/de Longueil, §30: 42.

- 12 Cf. Fragonard's *Le Feu aux poudres* at the Louvre, an ambiguously sensual painting of a woman sleeping, partly exposed and attended only by some little Amours.
- 13 Cf. *Le midi*, figure 3. 19.
- 14 The woman asleep provides the opportunity for prurient curiosity in the *Mémoires de Saturnin* (attributed to Gervaise de Latouche), for example: see Borel 1978: 61, 71.
- 15 In both quotations the italics are in the text, to denote societal jargon.
- 16 It is Western art, asserts John Berger, that invented the "supine" nude (Berger 1972: 53).
- 17 Cf. two illustrations in §81 (1:30 and 2:261) that show women (nymphs, in one instance) beholding a sleeping male. Tchermersine asserts that these 1733 illustrations of Urfé's *L'Astrée* are modeled upon seventeenth-century ones (1977: 5:946).
- 18 L. F. M. Bellin la Liborlière, *Anna Grenwil* (Paris: Lemarchand, an IX [1800]), 3: 161–63; quoted in Lévy 1973: 174, where it is accompanied by the Chaillou/Bovinet engraving. Cf. also pp. 178–79 the Lévy text and illustration of a similar scene by the same artists from Ann Radcliffe's *La forêt ou l'abbaye de Saint-Clair* (1798).
- 19 Among them is a reduction of the 1699 *Enlèvement de Proserpine par Pluton* which was one of the *quatre enlèvements* ensemble; cf. Francastel 1930: figs. 31–34.
- 20 Rosenberg 1974: 1: no. 381.
- 21 Ovid, trans. Chamonard, 232 (book 9).
- 22 This is an echo of a classical tradition extending "from Homer to Yeats," which Jean Hagstrum refers to in *The Sister Arts* as "iconic poetry": see Hagstrum 1958: 18 and ff.
- 23 Cf. "Syrinx métamorphosée en roseau," an illustration by Gravelot/Rousseau for the 1767 Ovid (Furstenberg 1975: no. 60).
- 24 "Mignonette," in *Le cabinet des fées*, vol. 24 (Amsterdam and Paris: Serpente, 1786), 415–46.
- 25 For clarity and consistency I refer the reader here to the Kehl edition for which the Moreau illustrations were created; actually, however, this plate and some others come from a separate bound volume of plates: *Estampes destinées à orner les éditions de M. de Voltaire* (Paris: chez l'auteur [Moreau], n.d.: Yale Beinecke Library, Altschul 33).
- 26 Voltaire, trans. Smollet et al., 38–39.
- 27 "L'évêque de Saint-Malo demandait toujours quel était ce patron dont il n'avait jamais entendu parler. Le jésuite, qui était fort savant, lui dit que c'était un saint qui avait fait douze miracles. Il y en avait un treizième qui valait les douze autres, mais dont il ne convenait pas à un jésuite de parler: c'était celui d'avoir changé cinquante filles en femmes en une seule nuit" [The bishop of Saint-Malo kept asking who this saint was of whom he had never heard. The Jesuit, a learned man, told him it was a saint who had performed twelve miracles. There was a thirteenth as marvelous as all twelve, which it was not a Jesuit's place to mention: in a single night he had transformed fifty maids into women] (chap. 4).
- 28 In the Moland ed. (Paris: Garnier, 1877), 10:11; illustrated by Monnet/Deny in *Romans et contes*, §89.
- 29 *Fables nouvelles*, §23: 82.
- 30 §69, part 4, letter 86. Cf. the frontispiece of part 3 of *La paysanne pervertie*, which represents a parallel scene: the kidnapping of Ursule by the Marquis de ***, who in fact will rape her also (it is reproduced in the edition of the Cercle du Livre Précieux of 1959).
- 31 *Receipt* = formula or prescription (*OED*).

- 32 In the Moland edition (Paris: Garnier, 1877–1885), 10:9–19; quotation is from pp. 10–11.
- 33 See also Boucher's *Danaé recevant la pluie d'or* in Burolet 1980: no. 15; there is also a *Jupiter et Danaé* of his engraved by Louis Marin Bonnet in 1774. This tradition persists in *Pluie d'or*, a painting by Alfred Pouthier at the Petit Palais that represents an elegant nude in a sexually receptive posture upon whom gold pieces are raining down.
- 34 Ovid, trans. Chamonard, 260 (book 10). It is significant that she is named (but not by Ovid) after the goddess of whiteness (see Boudard §14: 3:14; Boudard himself in this instance refers back to Boccaccio as his authority).
- 35 *Pygmalion*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 2 (Paris: Gallimard Pléiade, 1961), 1226.
- 36 An insertion of Grimm's in Diderot, *Salon de 1765*, ed. Jean Seznec, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 218. Interestingly, Diderot had felt on the contrary that Falconet's statue excelled in communicating the feeling of Galatea's flesh: "Quelles mains! quelles mollesse de chair! Non, ce n'est pas du marbre; appuyez-y votre doigt, et la matière qui a perdu sa dureté cédera à votre impression" [What hands! what soft flesh! No, that isn't marble; touch it with your finger, and the matter losing its hardness will yield to your touch]. Besides, he stresses that her skin, that of the little Amour, and that of Pygmalion each has a different quality. Yet he would prefer a *Pygmalion* where the sculptor is less a statue and Galatée rather more of one: in his imagined version, "Il y pose légèrement le dos de sa main gauche, il cherche si le coeur bat; cependant ses yeux attachés sur ceux de sa statue attendent qu'ils s'entr'ouvrent" [He places the back of his left hand on her lightly, to see if her heart is beating; meanwhile, his eyes fixed to the statue's wait for them to open]; this requires delaying her awakening to achieve a different narrative and dramatic economy. *Salon de 1763*, in *Salons de 1759–1761–1763* (Paris: Flammarion, 1967), 174–77.
- 37 This print is not dated; there are two Lagrenée *Pygmalions* recorded, one in 1773 and the other in 1777.
- 38 His plate accompanies a summary of the Ovid story, but the moment chosen for illustration is entirely different: the *fête de Vénus* is going on in the background, so *Pygmalion* (who is attending it) is not in the picture at all, although his tools are in evidence in the foreground.
- 39 In *Oeuvres complètes*, 2:1228.
- 40 The other two are in Holloway 1969: figs. 162–63. There are many other listed illustrations of Rousseau's work: cf. Girardin 1910.
- 41 Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, in *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959–69), 2: 1230.

7. *Exploitations*

- 1 There is a quite similar plate by Cochin/Tilliard in §77: 2:165.
- 2 "Le tact" (p. 71) in Barnabé Farmian de Rosoi, *Les sens* (1766); see Holloway 1969: fig. 59.
- 3 Picart's illustration for the former (§39: no. 37), interestingly, puts most of the emphasis on the storm, and the rest on Leander: the caption, moreover, is "Leander swims over the Hellespont to meet his mistress Hero." Dorat's poem "Héro à Léandre" (in *Lettres en vers*, §26) puts the emphasis, as the title suggests, on Hero, as

- does the headpiece by Eisen/de Longueuil. Cf. also figure 1.9 for Musaeus, discussed in Chapter 1.
- 4 See the illustration to Gessner's *Tableau du déluge*, figure 2.31, from §36: vol. 2.
 - 5 *S/Z* (Paris: Seuil, 1970), 149.
 - 6 There is thus reason to doubt—without impugning her analyses—Adrienne Munich's assumption in *Andromeda's Chains* (1989) that exploitation of the Andromeda myth in art was a particularly Victorian obsession.
 - 7 *Oeuvres diverses*, ed. Pierre Clarac (Paris: Gallimard, 1958), 138.
 - 8 Trans. A. E. Watts (*The Metamorphoses of Ovid* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1954]), p. 90; my italics.
 - 9 Two of Munich's categories of analysis are certainly pertinent here: the "poetics of rescue" embodied in Perseus's role—"Perseus saves Andromeda, then keeps her for sexual and dynastic purposes; obligated to her rescuer, she can neither rescue herself nor refuse his offer of marriage"—and the "politics of bondage," in Andromeda's: "Because the rescue justifies aggressive action, its violence is frequently ignored. Focus on the maiden's plight and the hero's rescue denies the prior fantasy of torment" (1989: 14, 16).
 - 10 Figure 7.14, below, is similar in that there is a patch of background between the monster and the heroine, but it is diegetically neutral in containing only hills and trees.
 - 11 There is also a Boucher/Aveline *Andromède* of 1734 (Bibliothèque nationale, Cabinet des Estampes).
 - 12 See Daniel Ternois and Ettore Camesasca, *Tout l'oeuvre peint d'Ingres* (Paris: Flammarion, 1971), 100.
 - 13 There is a Cochin/Ponce illustration of this (§2: canto 8).
 - 14 He carries her off to an isolated place: "When he had dismounted from his charger, he scarcely withheld himself from mounting another" (canto 10, stanza 114); but before he can get his armor off (a frustratingly slow procedure for him at this moment), Angélique has made herself invisible with the magic ring.
 - 15 Against Bireno, who deserted her: "I do not think that ever Bireno saw that fair body naked, for I am certain that he never would have been so cruel."
 - 16 See also Gravelot's 1750 illustration of the scene in Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* where Tom rescues Mrs. Waters, "stripped half naked," from Northerton who was tying her to a tree with a garter; there, too, the woman's breasts, of which Fielding makes much, are exposed to Tom's gaze (engr. Pierre Quentin Chedel, in *Histoire de Tom Jones*, 4 vols. [Amsterdam, 1750], book 9, 2:124).
 - 17 Boccaccio, trans. Musa and Bondanella, 349–50 (fifth day, sixth story).
 - 18 Cf. the Moreau/Delignon engraving of the same scene in the Kehl Voltaire, §85.
 - 19 Story by François Le Marchand published in the *Cabinet des fées* (Amsterdam, 1785), 18:325–443.
 - 20 See Sutton 1968: figs. 131–33; this scene, or one similar, was engraved by Gaillard (Jean-Richard 1978: no. 1036).
 - 21 Act 3, scene 1. Tasso, *Opere* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1963); trans. William Ayre, *Amintas, a Dramatic Pastoral* (n.p., n.d. [London, 1737]).
 - 22 Fürstenberg 1975: fig. 117.
 - 23 Cf. Borel/Voysard, *Le Maréchal des Logis*, in Adhémar 1963: 160. This victim has her bust partly exposed when rescued, and the legend reads in part: "Le Sieur Louis Gil-

- lot dit Ferdinand, . . . s'étant égaré dans la forêt, est attiré par les cris . . . d'une jeune fille que deux assassins avaient dépouillée et attachée à un arbre; le brave militaire vole au secours de l'infortunée, . . . délie la fille et la ramène à ses parents" [Lord Louis Gillot called Ferdinand, . . . having lost himself in the forest, was attracted by the cries . . . of a girl who had been stripped and attached to a tree by two attackers; the brave officer flew to her rescue, . . . untied the girl and returned her to her parents].
- 24 In some ways, the prototype is the widely reported anecdote of the Englishman Inkle who sold his Indian mistress Yariko into slavery; the subject is illustrated by Eisen as frontispiece for vol. 5 of Guillaume Raynal's *Histoire des deux Indes* in 1774 (La Haye: Gosse fils).
- 25 Cf. the figure of the woman warrior-prisoner by Lefebvre/Godefroy from Charles Morel de Vindé, *Zélorim*; and the beautiful cadaver from Anon., *Ladouski et Floriska* (it is impossible to be more "nue-couchée-passive" than this) in Lévy 1973: 60–61, 96–97.
- 26 "The sexualization and objectification of women," in Kaplan's summary of the Freudian perspective on the male gaze, "is not simply for the purposes of eroticism; from a psychoanalytic point of view, it is designed to annihilate the threat that woman (as castrated and possessing a sinister genital organ) poses" (1983: 31).

8 Decency and Indecency

- 1 Engraved by J. Eymard and J. F. Cazenave, Bouillon 1977: no. 11–12. There is also a Gérard plate of Fragonard's "Sacrifice de la rose," (ibid., no. 65), where the décolletage and especially the ecstatic expression of the woman—which Edmond and Jules de Goncourt aptly compared to Bernini's *Saint Theresa* (*French Eighteenth-Century Painters* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981], p. 281)—make clear what has transpired.
- 2 *Romans et contes* (Paris: Garnier, 1960), 394. "Fille d'affaire" is Voltaire's pun on the Latin meaning of *opéra*, *affaire* having then also the meaning of the English word *affair* or 'liaison'.
- 3 Voltaire, trans. Anon., *The Princess of Babylon*, 137.
- 4 (N.p., 1745), 159 (Bibliothèque nationale, Rés. Y². 512).
- 5 Could the symbol on the small mast atop the bed, by combining ♂ and ♀, allude to coitus? It is not impossible. In chemistry, ♂ represented iron or steel and ♀ copper, but these metals were also associated with, respectively, the planets—and perhaps via them with the gods—Mars and Venus (indeed, copper was in this period still sometimes called *vé nus*).
- 6 *Fables nouvelles*, §23: 39–41.
- 7 To take three perfectly representative examples, see Johann Anton de Peters's *La baigneuse*, Baudouin's *Le carquois épuisé* (Burolet 1980: nos. 4 and 82), and Lavreince's *Le lever* at the Musée des arts décoratifs.
- 8 Girodie 1927: pl. 4.
- 9 See, for example, the scene between Monroe and Mme Popinel in Andréa de Nerciat, *Monrose* (n.p., 1795), 2:21; also Anon. 1979: 60.
- 10 See Parelle/Bonner, *Provoking Fidelity*, in Dodgson 1924: pl. 27; and Huet, *La belle cachette*, at the Musée des arts décoratifs (which I am at a loss to explain specifically, especially its connection to Diana in the statue portrayed; but its obvious sexuality

is clearly related to the excited poodle facing the viewer). I might also mention a Lavreince/Launay plate entitled *Les soins mérités* (Bibliothèque nationale, Cabinet des Estampes) showing a woman and her servant administering an enema to a lapdog (we have seen earlier, at the end of Chapter 5, what the erotic associations of the enema can be).

- 11 Watteau fils/Le Beau. The national reference to style explains its presence at the Musée de l'Amitié Franco-Américaine et Blérancourt, where I observed it.
- 12 Engr. Charles François Adrien Macret and Jean-Louis Anselin, Bouillon 1977: no. 59.
- 13 See also Stewart 1978. For a nineteenth-century extension of this motif, cf. Gustave Courbet's *Femme nue au chien* at the Louvre.
- 14 *Oeuvres romanesques* (Paris: Garnier, 1962), 89.
- 15 Engraved by Charles Bertony circa 1770: see Posner 1973: no. 43, and Rosenberg 1988: no. 110.
- 16 One is on public view at the Musée des arts décoratifs; another was in a sale by Roger Peyrefitte in 1978 at the Hôtel Drouot.
- 17 Rosenberg 1988: no. 110, 232–35; the painting is in the Alte Pinakothek, Munich. Cf. Florent Fels, *Eros ou l'amour peintre* (Monte Carlo: Editions du Cap, 1968), p. 181 fig. 205; it was imitated by Lavreince (or Lafresen): see Kronhausen and Kronhausen 1968: 74. The different versions of the subject have often been confused: cf. Wildenstein and Mandel 1972: nos. 298, 299, and Rosenberg 1988: no. 110.
- 18 §62: 1.1. Perhaps it is significant, too, that the dog's name, Médor, coincides with the one in Diderot's *Les bijoux indiscrets*. Text and illustrations are reproduced in a recent edition by Images Obliques (Nericiat 1980). The same subject is represented in a plate to the anonymous *Mémoires de Suzon, soeur de D. B. portier des Chartreux* (Londres, 1778), reproduced in *L'Enfer de la Bibliothèque nationale* (Paris: Fayard, 1985), 3:281.
- 19 For example, *L'armoire* (Osborn 1929: pl. 17).
- 20 This pose is imitated by Thomas Rowlandson in a colored drawing called *The Inspection*, with respect to which editor Gert Schiff comments that "the shock which accompanied the child's discovery that the mother lacks a penis, and the ensuing fear that she could deprive him as well of this precious ornament of his body, are still at the base of the elderly—and virtually castrated—men's fascination with the vulva" (Schiff 1969: pl. 25 and p. xxv). The subject is not unrelated to the tradition of Susanna and the Elders—the subject of another Rowlandson drawing (pl. 23), quite similar also in subject to *The Curious Parson* (pl. 22) and *The Congregation* (pl. 24). It is clear that Rowlandson drew on French illustrations, quite directly reflected in two other subjects, *Les lunettes* (pl. 36) and *Le diable de papefiguières* (pl. 42), from La Fontaine. Schiff believes that most of the fifty plates date from 1812 or after (p. xxx).
- 21 Voltaire of course loved conflating sacred legend with profane, and there was, besides a not uncommon belief that woman's desire was more ravenous than man's, a certain persuasion derived from myth that she was capable of monstrous couplings; abbé J. Du Bosc recalls that "Semiramis loved a horse, Pasiphae a bull, Glauca a dog, and Glaucippa an elephant" (*L'honnête femme* [Paris: Douai, 1692], 234; quoted by Pierre Darmon in 1983: 35).
- 22 Cf. illustration no. 30, from an 1819–1825 edition of Voltaire, in Warner 1981.
- 23 *Inguen* = (Latin) 'groin'; *à cru* = 'sur la peau nue' or 'd'une façon crue.'
- 24 This text is given as a variant in Voltaire 1970: 637–38. Followed only by a page of explanations between Jeanne and Dorothée—"Si l'apparence est un peu contre moi, /

- J'en suis fâchée, et vous saurez vous taire" (638–39) [I'm sorry if appearances are somewhat against me; you will keep your peace], says Jeanne—this scene constituted the highly sarcastic conclusion of many editions of the poem in eighteen canti.
- 25 Cf. the scene in Nerciat's *Le diable au corps* involving the Comtesse, the Marquise, Philippine, and an ass: "On a quelque peine à porter l'animal, qui pourtant se laisse faire: on lui fait poser un pied, puis l'autre, sur le tabouret, on l'entretient toujours, par un léger attouchement, dans l'état heureux où nous le savons. Il sent, enfin, contre son ventre, la chaleur d'une croupe qui vaut bien celle d'une bourrique. Il semble pour lors prendre goût à la chose: son engin fait des mouvements superbes" [They had some difficulty placing the animal: they put one foot, then the other, on the stool, keeping him all the while, by little touches, in you know what state. He finally felt against his stomach the warmth of hind quarters worthy of a she-ass. Then he seemed to get interested: his tool acted magnificently] (§62: 1:176). There is also an engraving, which makes it clear that the artist was unable to accommodate the geometric mechanics involved: the recipient's body has to be impossibly contorted in order to get the right part of her in the right position (engraving reproduced by *Images Obliques* in Anon. 1979: 23 and Nerciat 1980).
- 26 *Abram et Agar*, engr. Philippe Trière, §73: 1:32.
- 27 §37: 4:47–48. Many aspects of this scene, especially Joseph's gesture, are structurally similar to Raphael's version in the Vatican Loggia, which Marillier had doubtless seen in engraved form (cf. Ettore Camesasca, *All the Frescoes of Raphael* [New York: Hawthorn, n.d.], pl. 141); but there, the pharaoh's wife was merely half-seated on the edge of the bed.
- 28 "Quand on peint, faut-il tout peindre? De grâce, laissez quelque chose à suppléer à mon imagination" [When you paint, must you paint everything? Please, leave something to my imagination]. *Salon de 1763*, in *Ecrits esthétiques* (Paris: Garnier, 1959), 452.
- 29 *Salon de 1765*, in *ibid.*, 459.
- 30 There are two famous ones, one at Rheims and the other at Cologne; the latter was engraved by Gilles Demarteau (see Adhémar 1963: 123).
- 31 The text is a variant to canto 14 (Voltaire 1970: 612–13). The spell of general madness is to be broken only if "la belle Corisandre / Aux lacs d'amour se laissera surprendre" [the lovely Corosandre can be caught in the web of love]; this only means one thing, but Voltaire is not nearly so graphic as the illustrator, being content to say that "Le muletier fit tant par ses menées / Qu'il accomplit ses hautes destinées. / Il la subjuge" [The muleteer's devices were so effective that he accomplished his eminent destiny. He conquered her].
- 32 As a kind of apostille to these explicit engravings, it might be remarked that they suggest an interesting detail of sexual life in the eighteenth century which has been little noticed: namely, the frequent practice of making love upright and almost fully clothed. Lawrence Stone has already observed that "couples almost never stripped naked in the eighteenth century in order to make love. Even honeymoon couples went to bed at night and got up again next morning dressed in a shirt and a smock, and there is evidence that they kept them on all night" (1985: 35). Our illustrations would not provide much corroboration for this; they represent plenty of absolutely naked couples making love, but that may be in part because—for their purposes, and quite apart from matters of daily practice—nudity was to be prioritized in and

for itself. There is thus little reason to take them as a form of direct documentation. Whatever evidence Stone has for his assertion, it would not be unreasonable to suspect that such not inconsequential amenities as central heating have, over time, had a considerable impact upon matters of bedtime conjugal dress. Yet the engravings would by their persistence seem to document some things to acceptable levels. We would not hesitate, for instance, to consider them valid witnesses of styles of clothing and decoration just because we distrust their overemphasis on sex. But these domains are nonetheless interdependent. We encounter in these illustrations many scenes featuring daytime sexual acts practiced with little or no removal of clothing; when women wore billowy skirts, and panties were unknown, that was an easier proposition than it would be, say, in an era characterized by snug and encompassing girdles. They also suggest to us with great insistence that people often took their pleasures with at least one partner standing up. This is one reason why sofas—those seemingly tiny Louis XV sofas, not to mention ottomans—can play such a large role in the erotic fiction of the period, Fougeret de Montbron's *Le canapé couleur de feu* and Crébillon's *Le sophia* being their most systematic literary exploitation. Today's literary (and cinematic) conventions of sex make of the bed the virtually universal locus, and without taking that difference into account, today's reader will not entirely understand such a passage as this: "Il est . . . à noter que Célie est dans un de ces grands fauteuils qui sont aussi favorables à la témérité que propres à la complaisance, et que sa position semble plus faite pour annoncer l'une que pour décourager l'autre" [It should be noted that Célie was in one of those large chairs which are as accommodating for boldness as they are appropriate for indulgence; and that her position seemed more suited to anticipate the former than to discourage the latter] (Crébillon, *Le Hasard du coin du feu* [Paris: Desjonquères, 1983], 230). Their notion of furniture conducive to sexual acts was quite unlike ours, particularly in assuming that it needed to feature a certain minimal (hip-) height. If, going back a good bit further, we were also to adduce the abundant evidence furnished by Pierre de Brantôme, it would seem that this had been a very common if not prevailing mode governing daytime trysts for quite some time. After all, Louis Armand de La Hontan's critical *ingénu* Adario in 1704 attributed a variety of French infirmities not only to immoderate "pleasures" but also to the time and manner in which they were practiced: "Car au sortir du repas et à l'issue d'une corvée de fatigue, vous embrassez vos femmes autant que vous pouvez, sur des chaises ou debout, sans considérer le dommage qui en résulte" (For on rising from table and after fatiguing work, you embrace your women as much as you can, on chairs or standing, without considering the resulting damage) (La Hontan, *Dialogues avec un sauvage* [Paris: Editions Sociales, 1973], 148).

- 33 See also, by the same artists, the illustration for Bion's first idyll, "Le tombeau d'Adonis," §32: 11.
- 34 It is exceptional, as earlier noted, for a woman to be watching a nude male as Anne is in this tale. As indecent engravings go, this "uncovered" view is a very mild instance by virtue of the fact that the male is in an unaroused state.
- 35 These two sets are illustrated in Gordon Ray 1982: 1: 57 and 109. Boissais and Deleplanque (1948: 101) cite four other tales of La Fontaine for which there exist *épreuves découvertes*: "Le diable de Papefiguière," "Les lunettes," "Le bât," and "Le rossignol."
- 36 In many cases the "rejection" of a plate has nothing to do with decency; usually it is a question of the placement and orientation of the characters, the second ver-

- sion borrowing many traits from the unused one but reorganizing them for different proportions or emphasis.
- 37 See Gordon Ray 1982: 1. 57; cf. the example of Calypso (109).
- 38 I refer to four states of the Moreau/Le Mire illustration for "Daphnis" in the 1795 edition of Gessner's *Idylles* §35, copy at Yale's Beinecke Library (Altschul 39, II. 50): the *eau forte* (etched but unengraved), and then three versions of the engraved plate, of which the second has two of the three characters' faces rubbed out (as well as the artists' signatures) in preparation for final touches. In England a celebrated modification of the 1654 plates from Ogilby's Virgil in 1697 significantly altered Aeneas's face, presumably to make him resemble King William: see Eleanor Winsor Leach, "Illustration as Interpretation in Brant's and Dryden's Editions of Vergil," in Hindman 1982: 206–7; and Steven N. Zwicker, *Politics and Language in Dryden's Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 190 and n. 22.
- 39 Between the Fragonard *eau-forte* shown in Furstenberg 1975 (no. 147) for *Le savetier* and the engraving by Jean Dambrun which appeared in the 1795 *Contes* (§45), the woman's *corsage* has come completely unlaced and her breasts bared (in the copy of the Rosenwald Collection at the Library of Congress, however, which contains two states of the plate, both manifest an equal décolletage).
- 40 The copy photographed in this case is in the Altschul collection (no. 13) of the Beinecke Library at Yale (1: 48).
- 41 Text and translation quoted from R. Howard Bloch, *Etymologies and Genealogies: A Literary Anthropology of the French Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 138–39. Further on the subject of "deflected" speech designating sexual parts, cf. Bloch's *The Scandal of the Fables* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 138–40 and *passim*.
- 42 "Car c'est volontiers et par intention merveilleuse que Dieu mit en c... et en v... faculté générative, afin que l'espèce vivante se renouvelle naturellement" ([Paris: Gallimard, 1949], p. 128).
- 43 "Le rossignol par M. Lamblin, conseiller du parlement de Dijon, ou par M. Troussel de Valincourt de l'Académie française" (§44: 2:295–302). It is based quite closely on a story from the *Decameron* (fifth day, fourth tale).
- 44 *In manus* = the first words of the prayer of the dying, "Into thy hands do I commit my spirit."
- 45 Most of my *galant* illustrations are taken from the Italian version (§12). There are two copies of §13 containing them in the Enfer of the Bibliothèque nationale; each contains only half the series, apparently because whoever removed the other half hoped thus to disguise the larceny. Some copies contain *calque* engravings (made by tracing over the originals) which are therefore reversed with respect to the Bibliothèque nationale copies. The series of illustrations is reproduced by Images Obliques in Anon. 1980.
- 46 Quoted without mention of source in Portalis 1877: 276–77. The expression *bout de tabac*, which obviously refers to the penis, may be slang based on analogy of appearance with a plug of tobacco.
- 47 Third day, sixth tale.
- 48 Seventh day, second tale.
- 49 §13: 4:20, Gravelot/Pasquelier.
- 50 Eighth day, first tale.

- 51 Ninth day, second tale.
- 52 A considerable sampling has been reproduced in recent years in volumes in the series "Images Obliques" (Anon. 1979, Anon. 1980, Borel 1978). Lawrence Stone notes that "Aretino's writings, and Giulio Romano's drawings and engravings of sexual postures, were almost the first works of pure eroticism or pornography in the West for over a thousand years. From Petronius to Aretino there was virtually nothing" (1985: 34). It should be noted that works by or attributed to Pietro Aretino and Giulio Romano continued to be reproduced, and imitated, throughout the eighteenth century; see, for example, the anonymous *Le Meursius français ou entretiens galants d'Aloysia* (Cythère, 1782), some of whose illustrations by Borel/Elluin are reproduced in Borel 1978.
- 53 Erotic art, notes Lawrence Stone, "may be more revealing about eccentric and illicit sexuality than the common and the licit. It may be part of a religious cult, say the cult of the phallus in Greece or the tantra in India or Taoism in China, and it may be subject to stylistic and even technical conventions. For example, it is much easier for an artist explicitly to depict a couple in the rear entry position than the missionary, which may account for the heavy preponderance of the former in the erotic art of most times and places" (1985: 29).

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